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STRANGE GALAXY

AUGUST 1971 50¢

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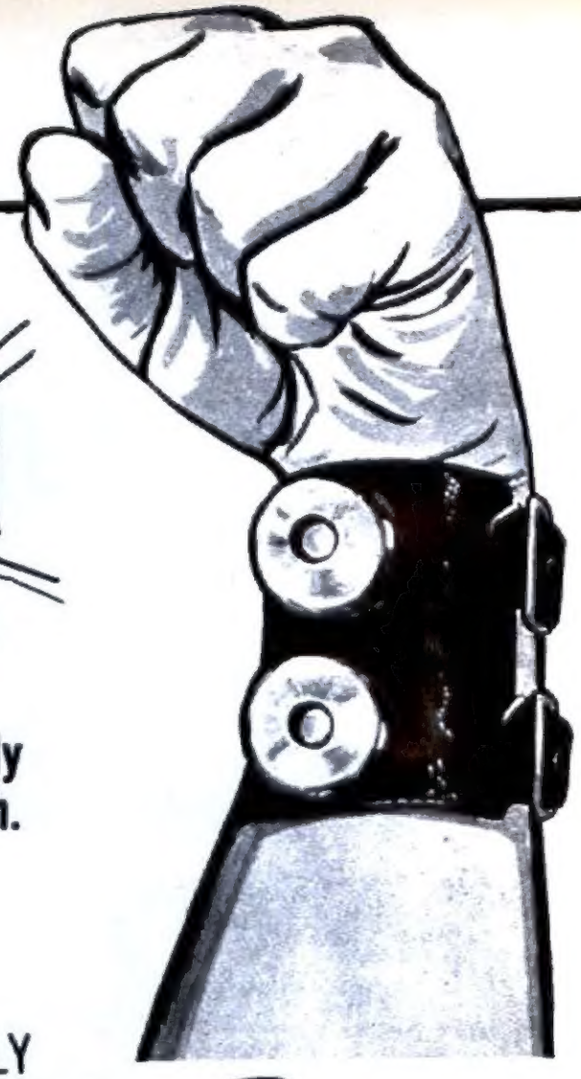
Develop Fearsome Defensive POWER With Weighted Wristlets



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CARL BURGOS, Editor **IRVING FASS**, Art Director
EZRA JACKSON, Art Editor

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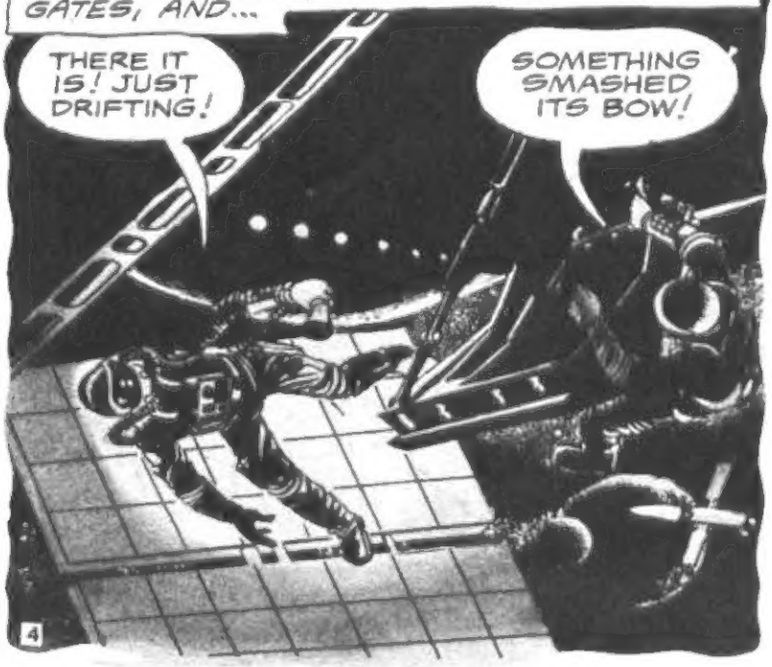
WHAT IS IT, THERE ON THE DARK, BLEAK, UNINHABITED LITTLE WORLD? HOW CAN IT STRIKE OUT AT THE GREAT PASSENGER LINERS PASSING THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY IN SPACE? JIM FANNING OF EARTH'S INTERPLANETARY EMERGENCY BUREAU FIGHTS DESPERATELY WITH THE **UNKNOWN** AS HE STRIVES TO SOLVE THE WEIRD...

TERROR ASTEROID

SO YOU'VE SOLVED THE MYSTERY! YOU'LL NEVER LIVE TO TELL IT, FANNING!

THE LINER **STARGLOW** FAILS TO ARRIVE IN GREAT-NEW YORK! A PATROL SHIP INVESTIGATES, AND...



INSIDE THE SPACE-LINER SHOCK STAGGERS THE INVESTIGATING ASTRONAUTS!

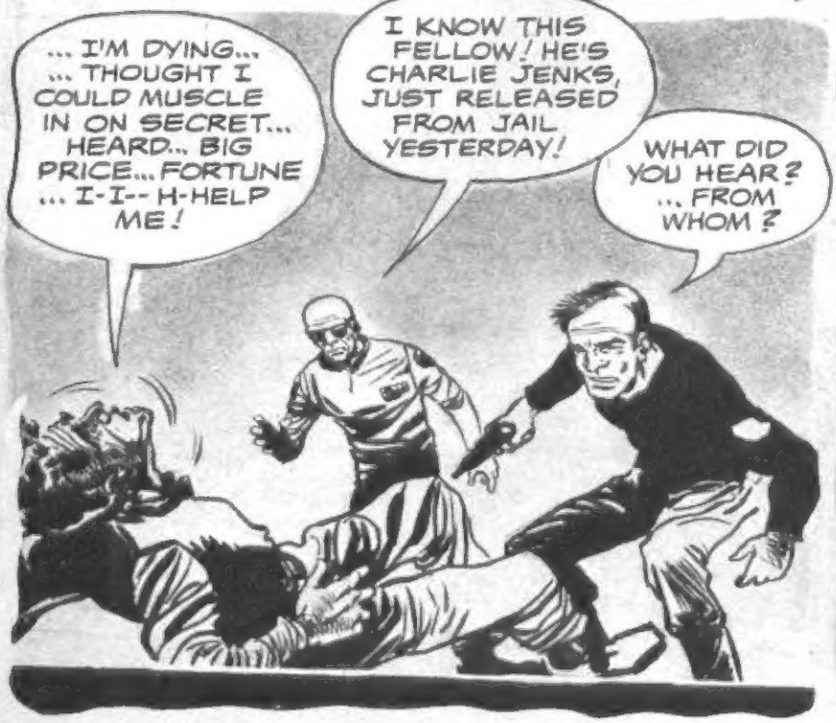
OTHER SHIPS WERE ALSO REPORTED MISSING! AND NOW, JIM FANNING, OF EARTH'S INTERPLANETARY EMERGENCY BUREAU, IS SUMMONED BY HIS CHIEF!
THE SPACE QUEEN LEAVES FOR MARS TONIGHT! I'M PLANTING YOU ABOARD AS A PASSENGER!
YOU THINK THE SPACE QUEEN WILL BE ATTACKED, CHIEF?

ONE THING IS CERTAIN, THOSE STRICKEN VESSELS WERE LOOTED! BUT NOTHING OF GREAT VALUE WAS ON THEM!
AND THIS VOYAGE IS DIFFERENT?

VERY DIFFERENT, FANNING! AS YOU KNOW, THE MARTIAN GOVERNMENT IS FACED WITH REBELLION ON ITS COLONY OF DEIMOS! SO EARTH IS SENDING THE SECRET OF OUR ELECTRONIC WEAPONS! THE DEIMOS REVOLUTION-- ISTS WOULD PAY A FORTUNE TO GET!

I THINK SOMEONE HAS GOTTEN WIND OF OUR PLANS! HE SEARCHED THOSE OTHER SHIPS FOR...
HOLD IT CHIEF! THERE'S--

FANNING LEAPS TO THE WINDOW...
GOT HIM!


... I'M DYING... ... THOUGHT I COULD MUSCLE IN ON SECRET... HEARD... BIG PRICE... FORTUNE ... I-I-- H-HELP ME!
I KNOW THIS FELLOW! HE'S CHARLIE JENKS, JUST RELEASED FROM JAIL YESTERDAY!
WHAT DID YOU HEAR? ... FROM WHOM?

THIS MAN, CARSON-- I THOUGHT I COULD JOIN HIM... MAKE PLENTY... IN A HURRY...
HE'S DEAD, CHIEF! HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT CARSON! WHO'S HE?

THERE WAS A MYSTERY ABOUT OLD MAN CARSON! HE WAS INVENTING SOMETHING-- NEVER WOULD SAY WHAT! THEN ABOUT A YEAR AGO-- HIS LAB EXPLODED! EVERYTHING WAS WRECKED! HIS BODY WASN'T FOUND!
MAYBE HE DID DIE IN THAT EXPLOSION, MAYBE HE DIDN'T!
THE CAPTAIN OF THE STAR QUEEN IS THE ONLY ONE WHO'LL KNOW YOUR IDENTITY DO YOUR BEST!
POSING AS A PASSENGER, FANNING MEETS SOME OF THE STAR QUEEN'S PASSENGERS! CAPTAIN WILKS INTRODUCES HIM!
AND THIS IS MISS ANNE ART!
YOUNG MAN, I'M GLAD TO MEET YOU!
MY PLEASURE, MISS ART!
AND THERE IS ARTHUR JEROME, WEALTHY INTERPLANETARY TRAVELER!
NICE GROUP OF PASSENGERS THIS VOYAGE, FANNING! I SAY, THERE ARE TWO WHO'VE BEEN SECLUDED ALL THIS TIME!
HELLO, FRIENDS! WE'RE JEROME AND JIM FANNING!
WE'RE PHILLIP AND BRENDA CARSON! TWINS, TWINS, NINETEEN YEARS OLD!
CARSON! WHA--?
AS SOON AS HE CAN MANAGE IT, FANNING IS CLOSETED WITH CAPTAIN WILKS, AND...
THAT DYING THUG MENTIONED THE NAME CARSON! WHO ARE THESE CARSON TWINS, CAPTAIN WILKS?
I DUNNO! BUT BY THE STARWAYS, I'LL SOON FIND OUT! I'LL SEND A HELIOQUERY TO THE INTERPLANETARY DETECTIVE BUREAU!
AND FROM GREAT-NEW YORK, THE HELIOED ANSWER COMES!
PHILIP AND BRENDA ARE CHILDREN OF PROFESSOR CARSON, WHO PERHAPS DIED IN LABORATORY EXPLOSION; HOWEVER, HE IS STILL LISTED MISSING!

NOW THE STAR QUEEN IS PASSING ASTEROID 9, A BLEAK, UNIHABITED LITTLE WORLD WHIRLING IN THE ASTEROID BELT BETWEEN EARTH AND MARS...
THOSE SPACE LINERS WERE ATTACKED JUST ABOUT HERE! WONDER IF THE RAIDERS STRIKE FROM ASTEROID?

AND AS JIM PONDERS THE POSSIBILITIES...
THE CARSON TWINS! THEIR FATHER WAS INVENTING SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS! COULD IT BE THAT ALL THREE OF THEM ARE IN ON THIS DIABOLICAL BUSINESS TOGETHER?

OH, PHIL! I'M SO FRIGHTENED! DO YOU THINK WE CAN DO IT?
YES, BUT WE'RE NOT THERE YET! WE'LL BE CLOSER IN A FEW HOURS!
CLOSER TO WHAT?

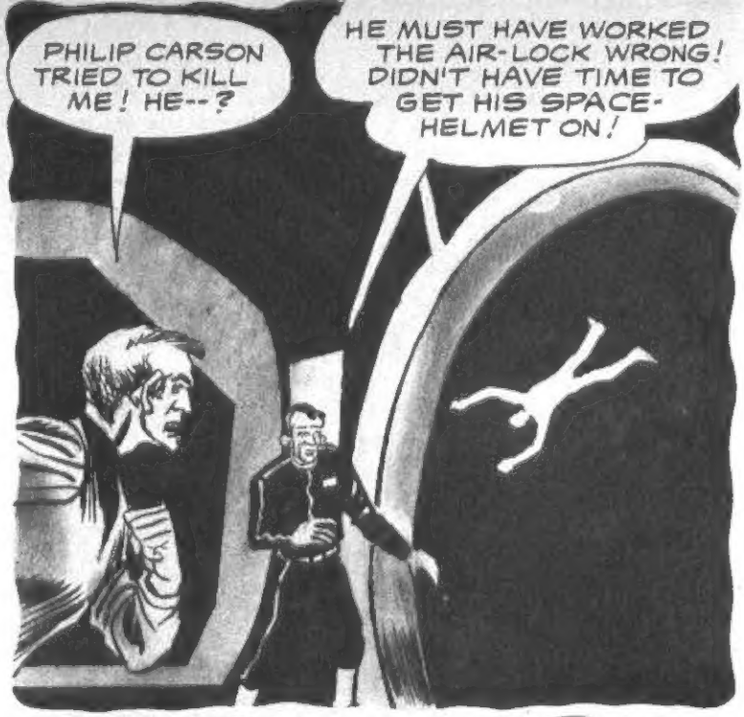
THEN, IN ANOTHER INSTANT THEY DISAPPEARED INTO THE SHADOWS...
"CAN WE DO IT?" SHE ASKED HIM! DO WHAT? WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?

THEN, SUDDENLY, FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS...
WHA-- ?!

FANNING WAS TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE, BUT HE HAD SENSE ENOUGH TO DUCK AS THE FLASH OF THE RAY-GUN BARELY MISSED HIS HEAD!

AND THEN...
UGH
... MY HEAD!

AS FANNING SCRAMBLES TO HIS FEET, HE HEARS A DISTANT SOUND OF HISSING AIR, AND A TURMOIL OF SHOUTS!
HEY! WHAT'S HAPPENED? HEAR THAT AIR? SOMEBODY'S LEAVING THE SHIP-- OUT THE AIR LOCK!
ARE THE CARSON TWINS ESCAPING?


PHILIP CARSON TRIED TO KILL ME! HE--?
HE MUST HAVE WORKED THE AIR-LOCK WRONG! DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO GET HIS SPACE-HELMET ON!

GRUESOME, PATHETIC LITTLE SATELLITE! ASPHIXIATED IN THE AIRLESS VACUUM OF SPACE, HELD BY THE STAR QUEEN'S GRAVITY PULL, THE BODY IS SLOWLY CIRCLING THE SHIP!
LOOK! IT'S BRENDA CARSON! --THE ESCAPING AIR FROM THE ESCAPE-PORT PULLED HER OUT TOO SOON!

WHERE'S PHILIP CARSON? SEARCH THE SHIP! FIND HIM!
MAYBE HE'S STILL IN THE ESCAPE-PORT! IT'S HISSING AGAIN!

THEN, SUDDENLY...:
THERE HE GOES!--HEADING FOR ASTEROID 9!

FANNING DONS AN EMERGENCY POWERED SPACE-SUIT, AND...
NOW IF ONLY I CAN KEEP HIM IN SIGHT...

BUT THE ESCAPING FIGURE IS ALREADY LOST IN THE STARFIELD! FANNING PLUNGES ON, AND AT LAST...
LUCK'S WITH ME! THERE HE GOES!

THERE IS ATMOSPHERE AND GRAVITY SIMILAR TO EARTH'S ON THE LITTLE WORLD! AS HE LANDS, FANNING TOSSES OFF HIS HELMET, AND...
NOW I'LL GET HIM!

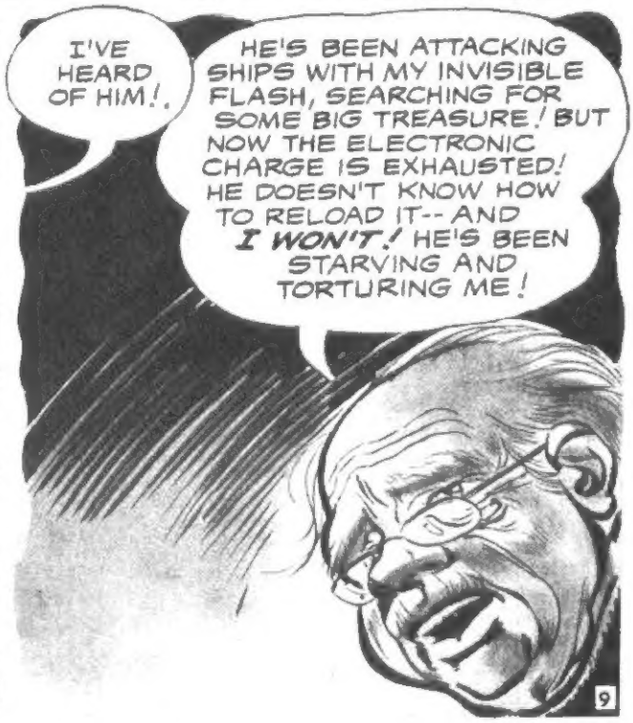
WHY-- WHY, IT'S BRENDA!
JIM FANNING! OHH!

IT HAD BEEN PHILIP CARSON WHO HAD BEEN ASPHIXATED! THE GIRL HAD PLUNGED ON HERE, TRYING TO CARRY OUT THEIR DESPERATE PLAN!
WE-- WE THOUGHT FATHER WASN'T KILLED BY HIS LABORATORY EXPLOSION! --THAT HE WAS ABDUCTED, AND HIS INVENTION STOLEN!
THEN IT WASN'T PHILIP WHO ATTACKED ME ON THE STAR QUEEN!

BY WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING TO SPACE-LINERS, IT SEEMS FATHER'S INVENTION IS BEING OPERATED FROM HERE! HE WOULDN'T DO THINGS LIKE THAT, SO WE--
LOOK! THERE'S A LIGHT-GLOW OUT THERE!

THE CARSON TWINS HAD TAKEN THE STAR QUEEN, PLANNING TO COME TO ASTEROID 9 IN SEARCH OF THEIR FATHER!
THERE HE IS! FATHER!
BRENDA!

I-I HAD JUST PERFECTED MY LONG-RANGE, INVISIBLE-FLASH SPACE-GUN! I WAS GOING TO GIVE IT TO THE EARTH-GOVERNMENT! HE BLEW UP MY LABORATORY-- BROUGHT ME AND MY GUN HERE! HE CALLS HIMSELF THE LONE WOLF!


I'VE HEARD OF HIM!.
HE'S BEEN ATTACKING SHIPS WITH MY INVISIBLE FLASH, SEARCHING FOR SOME BIG TREASURE! BUT NOW THE ELECTRONIC CHARGE IS EXHAUSTED! HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO RELOAD IT-- AND I WON'T! HE'S BEEN STARVING AND TORTURING ME!

THEN A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO, HE LEFT ME MAROONED HERE, AND WENT AWAY IN HIS LITTLE FLYER!
CAPTAIN WILKES HAS COME TO INVESTIGATE!
LOOK! THE STAR QUEEN!

WHILE ON BOARD ALL HANDS ARE DEAD...
OHH! DEAD! ALL OF THEM DEAD! ASPHIXATED!
OUT IN SPACE SOMEONE ON BOARD MUST HAVE OPENED THE PORTS LETTING ALL THE SHIP'S AIR OUT!

A DESPERATE, EVIL PERSON PROTECTED HIMSELF BY WEARING A SPACE-SUIT, AND HID ON BOARD, DETERMINED TO GET THE SHIP'S TREASURE! HE HAD NOW BROUGHT THE SHIP OF THE DEAD TO ASTEROID 9!
WITH THE INVISIBLE-FLASH SPACE-GUN USELESS, HE HAD TO DO IT THIS WAY!
OHH! LOOK OUT!

SO IT'S ARTHUR JEROME-- THE INTERPLANETARY TRAVELER! TOO BAD I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU WHEN YOU ATTACKED ME!
THIS TIME I'LL FINISH YOU!

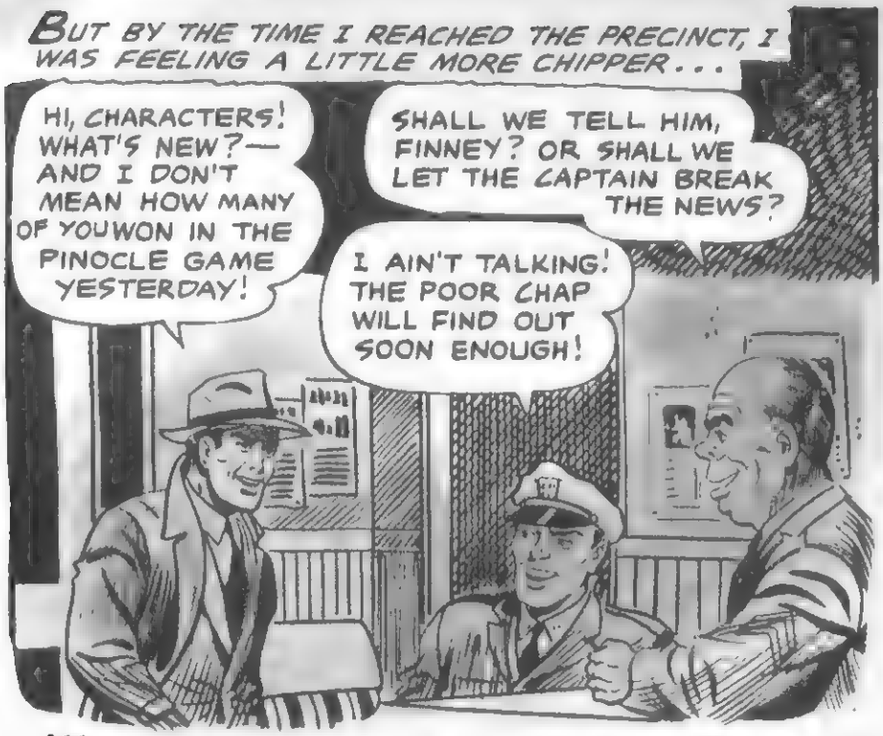
A DESPERATE LIFE-OR DEATH STRUGGLE!
NO, YOU DON'T!

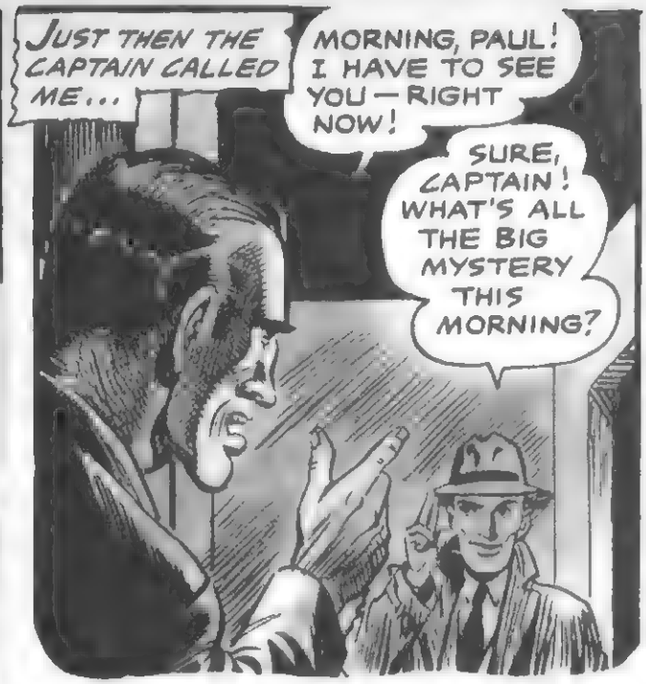
AS THEY FALL, ROLLING ON THE GROUND, JEROME BREAKS AWAY AND MAKES A RUN FOR IT!
AA
IEEE!
GOT HIM!

I'LL NAVIGATE THE STAR QUEEN BACK TO EARTH!
AND IT'S MY CHANCE TO GIVE MY INVENTION TO THE EARTH GOVERNMENTS... NEVER TO BECOME THE INSTRUMENT OF A MADMAN!
THE END

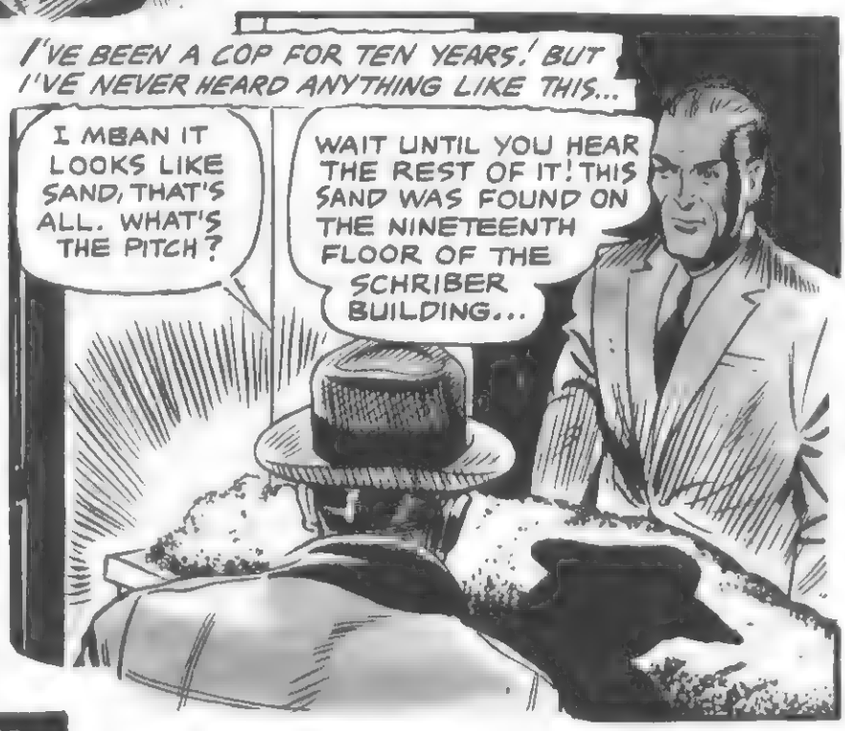
YOU COULD SAY I'M REAL GONE – BUT THE FACT REMAINS THIS IS ON RECORD! I HAD THE EXPERIENCE TO END ALL! I WAS A DETECTIVE AND NOT A ROOKIE, EITHER, WHO HAD A CASE NO ONE TOLD ME ABOUT AT THE POLICE ACADEMY! IF YOU'D LIKE THE ACTUAL DETAILS YOU CAN READ THEM BELOW! DON'T ASK ME HOW OR WHY IT HAPPENED... FOR ALL I KNOW MAYBE THERE WAS

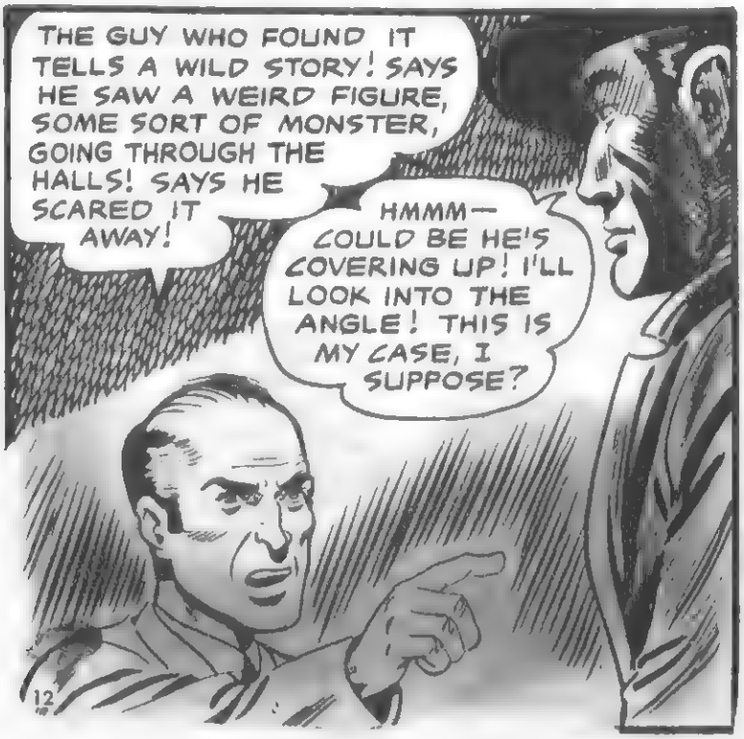
A HOLE in the SKY!


BUT BY THE TIME I REACHED THE PRECINCT, I WAS FEELING A LITTLE MORE CHIPPER...
HI, CHARACTERS! WHAT'S NEW?— AND I DON'T MEAN HOW MANY OF YOU WON IN THE PINOCLE GAME YESTERDAY!
SHALL WE TELL HIM, FINNEY? OR SHALL WE LET THE CAPTAIN BREAK THE NEWS?
I AIN'T TALKING! THE POOR CHAP WILL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH!


JUST THEN THE CAPTAIN CALLED ME...
MORNING, PAUL! I HAVE TO SEE YOU — RIGHT NOW!
SURE, CAPTAIN! WHAT'S ALL THE BIG MYSTERY THIS MORNING?

WE WENT TO THE BACK ROOM...
SEE THIS, PAUL! IT'S A PILE OF SAND... I JUST GOT IT BACK FROM THE LAB... THEY TELL ME IT'S NINETY-NINE PER-CENT CARBON.
VERY IN-TERESTING, CAP, BUT I DON'T FOLLOW!


I'VE BEEN A COP FOR TEN YEARS! BUT I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING LIKE THIS...
I MEAN IT LOOKS LIKE SAND, THAT'S ALL. WHAT'S THE PITCH?
WAIT UNTIL YOU HEAR THE REST OF IT! THIS SAND WAS FOUND ON THE NINETEENTH FLOOR OF THE SCHRIBER BUILDING...


THE GUY WHO FOUND IT TELLS A WILD STORY! SAYS HE SAW A WEIRD FIGURE, SOME SORT OF MONSTER, GOING THROUGH THE HALLS! SAYS HE SCARED IT AWAY!
HMMM— COULD BE HE'S COVERING UP! I'LL LOOK INTO THE ANGLE! THIS IS MY CASE, I SUPPOSE?

IT SURE WAS MY CASE! IT TOOK ME ALL DAY TO TRACE DOWN THE CHARACTER WHO'D FOUND THE SAND — BUT HE COULDN'T HELP ANY. IT WAS AFTER DARK WHEN I FINALLY REACHED THE SCHRIBER BUILDING...
I DON'T BUY THE MONSTER THEORY AT ALL! LOOKS LIKE A TOUGH ONE, ALL RIGHT! A BIG OFFICE BUILDING WITH A COUPLE OF THOUSAND PEOPLE WORKING IN IT...

PEOPLE DON'T WORK LATE IN OUR TOWN! THE BUILDING WAS DARK AND FULL OF ECHOES! THEN I HEARD THE RATTLE...
GOOD GRIEF! SOUNDS LIKE SOMEBODY WITH IRON SHOES COMING FROM THE SECOND FLOOR, I THINK!
I REACHED THE SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR —AND THERE IT WAS! FANTASTIC, INCREDIBLE, BUT THERE IT WAS! A QUEER SOMETHING OUT OF NOWHERE...
GREAT SCOTT! WHAT IS THAT THING? GOT TO STOP IT!
THE THING PAUSED AND TURNED ON ME...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE, BUT THESE .45 SLUGS OUGHT TO TAKE CARE OF YOU! THEY'D STOP AN ELEPHANT!
I'D NEVER BEEN SO WRONG! THE SLUGS HAD NO MORE EFFECT ON IT THAN BB SHOTS! I STARTED TO TREMBLE...
I—I CAN'T STOP IT! BULLETS SEEM TO GO RIGHT THROUGH IT! T—THIS THING IS FANTASTIC!
IT CAME CLOSER AND MY GUN JUST DROPPED OUT OF MY NERVELESS HAND. OH, BROTHER, IF THE FELLOWS AT THE PRECINCT SAW ME THERE! I JUST GAVE A MOAN AND SLIPPED TO THE FLOOR...
I GUESS I FAINTED, AND IF I DID, WHEN I OPENED MY EYES AND SAW THAT FACE, I FAINTED AGAIN...
WHEN I CAME OUT OF IT, TWO OF THE BOYS WERE KNEELING BESIDE ME...
WHAT WAS IT, LIEUTENANT? WE JUST GOT A GLIMPSE!
YOU'RE LUCKY, THEN! IT WAS SOMETHING OUT OF A BOOK!
YOU'D BETTER SEE THE DOC!

I WAS IN FAIR SHAPE, PHYSICALLY! BUT WHEN I TRIED TO TELL THEM WHAT I'D SEEN, THEY THOUGHT I WAS A CANDIDATE FOR THE LAUGHING ACADEMY...

BUT I TELL YOU I'M NOT OFF MY ROCKER! I REALLY SAW THAT THING!

HMMM— HE'S HAD A TERRIBLE SHOCK!

I DON'T GET IT, PAUL! YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A LEVEL HEADED COP! AND THERE'S JUST ENOUGH BACKING TO YOUR STORY! THE ORIGINAL WITNESS, FOR INSTANCE...

THAT'S JUST IT! THE GUY WHO FOUND HER BODY ALSO SAW THE MONSTER! EVEN THE COPS WHO SAVED ME SAW SOMETHING — EVEN IF THEY DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK! I TELL YOU IT EXISTS!

THE PHONE RANG AND THE CAPTAIN PICKED IT UP! AFTER THAT ALL THE TALKING WAS OVER...

BETTER SEND THE RIOT SQUAD, SIR! THAT THING, WHATEVER IT IS, HAS APPEARED AGAIN!—

WHAT? THE MONSTER AGAIN? SEEN BY A JANITOR THIS TIME — AND YOU SAW IT YOURSELF! OKAY, WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE!

I COULD SEE HE WAS CONVINCED NOW! A MINUTE AGO I'D BEEN ON MY WAY TO THE YO-YO ACADEMY— NOW I WAS BACK ON THE CASE...

OKAY, PAUL, I GUESS IT'S A MONSTER! GET WITH IT! GO WITH THE RIOT SQUAD! I'LL FOLLOW ALONG WITH THE COMMISSIONER! THIS I WANT HIM TO SEE!

I'M ON MY WAY!

SO, WITH SIRENS SCREAMING, WE WENT BACK TO THE SCHRIBER BUILDING...

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, LIEUTENANT? WE BEEN HEARING RUMORS ABOUT A MONSTER — OR SOMETHING!

I HOPE YOU NEVER FIND OUT, MORTON! NOT IF YOU EVER WANT TO SLEEP WELL AGAIN! NOW STEP ON IT!

PROWL CARS WERE CLOTTED AROUND THE ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING! MEN BOILED ALL OVER THE PLACE! I BROKE FOR THE ENTRANCE THE SECOND WE SKIDDED TO A HALT...

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S UP? THIS WAS A SIGNAL 32!

COME ON! AND HAVE YOUR GUNS READY! THIS THING IS FOR REAL!

WE ALL HEARD THE RATTLING AS WE POUNDED INTO THE BUILDING AND UP THE STAIRS...
COMING FROM UPSTAIRS, LIEUTENANT! GOSH — LISTEN TO IT!
YEAH! EACH ONE OF YOU MEN TAKE A CORRIDOR! AND BE ALERT!
I ROUNDED A CORNER AND THERE IT WAS AGAIN! AND THIS TIME IT HAD ONE OF MY BOYS...
EASY, MORGAN... WE'RE HERE!
Y!!!!!!!—
THE MONSTER TURNED QUICKLY ASIDE AND FACED US... ESPECIALLY ME...
WANTS ME AGAIN! AND I DON'T FEEL FRIENDLY!
MY BULLETS COULDN'T HARM IT! BUT FOR SOME REASON IT TURNED AWAY FROM ME! AND BEGAN TO RETREAT..
IT'S RUNNING! ACTUALLY RUNNING AWAY FROM ME! I DON'T GET IT!
THEN I GOT ANOTHER SURPRISE! AS HEAVY AND UNWIELDY AS IT LOOKED, THAT THING COULD RUN LIKE A DEER! I FOLLOWED, BUT COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH IT...
GETTING AWAY! BUT IT'S GOING UP — NO WAY OUT OF THE BUILDING THAT WAY!
STAIRS
CAUTIOUSLY I WENT UP THE DARK STAIR! I COULD HEAR IT CLUMPING UP AHEAD OF ME...
I'M PROBABLY A FOOL FOR TRYING TO FOLLOW THIS THING ALONE, BUT I WANT TO GET THAT MONSTER MYSELF IF I CAN!
SUDDENLY I SAW IT AGAIN, LOOMING AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR! AND NOW IT SEEMED TO BE AT BAY, WAITING THERE FOR ME...
LOOKS LIKE IT WANTS TO HAVE A SHOWDOWN! OR MAYBE MY BULLETS HAVE BEEN HURTING IT ALL ALONG! THAT MUST BE IT — THE WOUNDS ARE FINALLY CATCHING UP WITH IT!

SUDDENLY I FELT OPTOMISTIC! THE THING LOOKED STRANGELY HARMLESS...
FUNNY! IT'S NOT MAKING A MOVE NOW! MAYBE I'VE GOT IT!
THEN SUDDENLY THE THING WENT CRASHING DOWN TO THE FLOOR...
THERE, YOU FILTHY CHARACTER, WHATEVER YOU ARE! YOU'LL NEVER TERRIFY ANYBODY ELSE!
THEN I GOT A SHOCK! THE THING WAS NOTHING — JUST AN EMPTY SHELL, AN ARMORED COSTUME OF SOME KIND THAT HAD COLLAPSED UNDER THE IMPACT OF MY BULLETS...
H-HUH? NOTHING TO IT! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING IN IT — MAYBE ONLY A PRACTICAL JOKE AFTER ALL!
I HEARD THE SOUND BEHIND ME THEN! A VOICE — LIKE NOTHING I'D EVER HEARD BEFORE...
BEHIND ME! THAT SOUND — BECKONING — AND I FEEL — SO — STRANGE! CAN'T M-MOVE —
I MANAGED TO TURN, THEN I STOPPED! WHAT I SAW WAS FANTASTIC! AND I WAS UNABLE TO MOVE... IT HAD TURNED SOME SORT OF RAY ON ME THAT LEFT ME POWERLESS...
I WAS STILL UNABLE TO MOVE AS IT TURNED AWAY! AND I COULD UNDERSTAND ITS THOUGHTS, NOT THE LANGUAGE ITSELF. SOMEHOW IT HAD THE POWER OF GETTING THROUGH TO ME...
ETNAX PURTTSER COMANE ELIXERT!
I CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT IT SAYS! FUNNY! IT'S WARNING ME NOT TO BE AFRAID!
IT'S SAYING IT COMES FROM A FAR PLACE — FROM OUT T-THERE! AND NOW IT IS RETURNING TO REPORT!
REMEU NARRI BLOPPPEEEXX — ELCOT ZIVI!

SUDDENLY I FELT THE PARALYSIS WEAR OFF! I COULD MOVE AGAIN! AND SOMEHOW I KNEW THAT NOW THE CREATURE WANTED ME TO FOLLOW IT...
VIR GENZI TOR MAXT! TUTEO B-AK!
TELLING ME NOT TO USE MY GUN — THAT I COULDN'T USE IT ANYWAY! AND NOW IT'S GOING TO SHOW ME SOMETHING!
I FOLLOWED, ALMOST ON INSTINCT, AND HEARD THE LANGUAGE OF THE CREATURE IN MY BRAIN! IT WAS SCOLDING ME NOW — CALLING ME A FOOL...
WUZU HAH? NEC TIR BAKERTO? HAH — HAH — HAH — HAH — HAH — HAH!
SAYS FOR ME TO WATCH CLOSELY NOW! IT'S GOING TO CHANGE FORM AGAIN! SHOWING ME HOW THEY DO THINGS OUT THERE!
I WENT UP THE TV TOWER AFTER IT! I DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO, BECAUSE I WAS SCARED STIFF, BUT IT WAS PULLING ME ALONG AFTER IT...
SAYING THAT IT'S SORRY IT SCARED THE HUMANS, BUT THEY ATTACKED HIM, TRIED TO KEEP HIM FROM CARRYING OUT HIS MISSION!
IT REACHED THE TOP OF THE TV TOWER AND STOPPED, STARING DOWN AT ME! AND THEN IT STARTED GABBLING AT ME AGAIN...
WIX LU! TIMOR MORTIS BIX LAMINA! WURRA EST SAPIO KENTX!
THE HUMAN RACE IS FOOLISH, IT SAYS! ONLY OUTSIDE INTERVENTION, FROM OUT WHERE IT COMES FROM, CAN SAVE US!
SUDDENLY IT WHIRLED OUT AND AWAY FROM THE TOWER! FOR A MOMENT IT HUNG SUSPENDED IN MID-AIR, GLOWING WITH A STRANGE, BLUISH LIGHT, STILL TALKING TO ME...
REBUSX NAIRE PAET UKA ESTE — MAX — UUPPPPT!
IT'S GOING TO TELL "THEM" — "OUT THERE" — IT MIGHT NOT BE WORTH IT!
IT CHANGED, THEN, AND WENT WHIRLING OFF INTO SPACE, TRAILING LIGHT BEHIND IT! AND AT LAST I UNDERSTOOD..
A FLYING SAUCER! THAT THING HAS CHANGED ITSELF INTO A FLYING SAUCER!
AND THAT'S THE STORY! MAYBE IT WILL COME BACK AND BRING OTHERS WITH IT, MAYBE IT WON'T! MAYBE THEY, OUT THERE, WILL LEAVE US TO WORK OUT OUR OWN DESTINY! I WONDER! WISH I COULD CONTACT HIM AGAIN AND TRY TO STRIKE UP A FRIENDSHIP!
The End

THE MACHINE

By F. PAUL WILSON

DR. EDWARD PARKER REACHED ACROSS his desk and flipped the power switch on his tape recorder on the "on" position. "I want you to listen to this, Burke," he said. "She has classic paranoic symptoms; I wouldn't put much faith in anything she says."

Detective Ronald Burke, an old acquaintance on the city police force, sat across from the doctor. "She's all we've got," he replied with ill-concealed exasperation. "Over a hundred people disappear from an apartment house and the only person who might be able to tell us anything is a nut!"

Parker glanced at the recorder and noticed the glowing warm-up light. He pressed the button that started the tape. "Listen:"

". . . and I guess I'm the one who's responsible for it but it was really the people who lived there in my apartment building who drove me to it—they were jealous of me.

"The children were the worst. Every day as I'd walk to the store they'd spit at me behind my back and call me names. They even got other little brats from all over town and would wait for me on corners and doorsteps. They called me terrible names and said that I carried awful diseases. Their parents put them up to it, I know it. All the people in my apartment building laughed at me. They thought they could hide it but I heard it. They hated me because they were jealous of my poetry. They knew I was famous and they couldn't stand it.

"Why just the other night I caught

three of them rummaging through my desk. They thought I was asleep and so they sneaked in and tried to steal some of my latest works, figuring they could palm them off as their own. But I was awake. I could hear them laughing at me as they searched. I grabbed the butcher knife that I always keep under my pillow and ran out into the study. I must have made some noise when I got out of bed because they ran out into the hall and closed the door just before I got there. I heard one of them on the other side say, 'Boy, you sure can't fool that old lady!"

"They were fiends, all of them! But the very worst was that John Hendricks fellow next door who was trying to kill me with an ultra-frequency sonicator. He used to turn it on me and try to boil my brains while I was writing. But I was too smart for him! I kept an ice-pack on my head at all hours of the day. But even that didn't keep me from getting those awful headaches that plague me constantly. He was to blame.

"But the thing I want to tell you about is the machine in the cellar. I found it when I went down to the boiler room to see who was calling me filthy names through the ventilator system. I met the janitor on my way downstairs and told him about it. He just laughed and said that there hadn't been anyone down in the boiler room for two years, not since we started getting our heat piped in from the building next door. But I *knew* someone was down there—hadn't I heard those voices through the vent? I simply turned and went my way.

"Everything in the celler was covered with at least half an inch of dust—everything, that is, except the machine. I didn't know it was a machine at that time because it hadn't done anything yet. It didn't have any lights or dials and it didn't make any noise. It just sat there being clean. I also noticed that the floor around it was immaculately clean for about five foot in all directions. Everywhere else was filth. It looked so strange, being clean. I ran and got George, the janitor.

"He was angry at having to go downstairs but I kept pestering him until he did. He was mighty surprised. " 'What *is* that thing?' he said, walking towards the machine. Then he was gone! One moment he had been there, and then he was gone. There was no blinding flash or puff of smoke . . . just gone! And it happened just as he crossed into that circle of clean floor around the machine.

"I immediately knew who was responsible: John Hendricks! So I went right upstairs and brought him down. I didn't bother to tell him what that machine had done to George since I was sure he knew all about it. But he surprised me by walking right into the circle and disappearing, just like George.

"Well, at least I wouldn't be bothered by that ultra-frequency sonicator of his anymore. It was a good thing I had been too careful to go anywhere near that thing.

"I began to get an idea about that machine—*it was a cleaning machine!* That's why the floor around it was so clean. Any dust or *anything* that came within the circle was either stored away somewhere or destroyed!

"A thought struck me: why not 'clean out' all of my jealous neighbors this way? It was a wonderful idea! I decided to start with the children . . .

"I went outside and, as usual, they started in with their name-calling (they always made sure to do it very softly but I could read their lips). There were about twenty of them playing in the street. I called them together and told them I was forming a club in the cellar. They all followed me down in a group. I pointed to the machine and told them that there was a gallon of chocolate ice cream behind it and that the first one to reach it could have it all. Their greedy little faces lighted up and they scrambled away in a mob.

"Three seconds later I was alone in the cellar.

"I then went around to all the other apartments in the building and told all those hateful people that their sweet little darlings were playing in the old boiler room and that I thought it was dangerous. I waited for one to go downstairs before I went to the next door. Then I met the husbands as they came home from work and told them the same thing. And if anybody came looking for someone, I sent him down to the cellar. It was all so simple: in searching the cellar they had to cross into the circle sooner or later.

"That night I was alone in the building. It was wonderful—no laughing, no name-calling and no one sneaking into my study. Wonderful!

"A policeman came the next day. He knocked on my door and looked very surprised when I opened it. He said he was investigating a number of missing persons reports. I told him that everyone was down in the cellar. He gave me a strange look but went to check. I followed him.

"The machine was gone! Nothing was left but the circle of clean floor. I told the officer all about it, about what horrible people they were and how they deserved to disappear. He just smiled and brought me down to the station where I had to tell my story again and they sent me here to

see you.

"They're still looking for my neighbors, aren't they? Won't listen when I tell them that they'll never find them. They don't believe there ever *was* a machine! But they can't find my neighbors, can they? Well, it serves them ight! I told them I'm the one responsible for 'cleaning out' my apartment building but they don't believe me. Serves them *all* right!"

"See what I mean?" said Dr. Parker with the slightest trace of a smile as he turned the recorder off. "She's no help at all."

"Yeah, I know she's as looney as they come," said Burke. "But how can you explain that circle of clean floor in the boiler room with all those footprints around it?"

"Well, I can't be sure, but the 'infernal machine' is not uncommon in the paranoid's delusional system. You found no trace of an 'ultra-frequency sonicator' in the Hendricks' apartment I trust?"

Burke shook his head. "No. From what we can gather, Hendricks knew nothing about electronics. He was a short-order cook in a greasyspoon downtown."

"I figured as much. She probably found everybody gone and went looking for them. She went down to the boiler room as a last resort and, finding *it* deserted, concluded that everybody has been 'cleaned out' of the building. She was glad but wanted to give herself the credit. She saw the circle of clean floor—probably left there by a round table top that had been recently moved—and started fabricating. By now she no doubt believes every word of her fantastic story. We'll never know what really happened until we find those missing tenants."

"I guess not," Burke said as he rose to go, "but I'd still like to know why we can find over a hundred sets of footprints approaching the circle but none leaving it."

Dr. Parker didn't have an answer for that one.

TO PROBE TOO DEEPLY INTO NATURE'S SECRETS IS TO INVITE THE DEVASTATION OF THE ***CRUSHING*** HAND OF ***DOOM***! TO RELEASE NEW FORCES IS TO MEET WITH THE ***APPALLING*** HORROR, THE ***MURDEROUS*** FURY OF THE...

DOOM CREATURES

THIS IS OUR ***ONE CHANCE*** TO DESTROY THESE MONSTERS! IF WE FAIL, THE EARTH IS ***DOOMED! LET'S GO!***

ARGHHH!

ROWR-R!

YAHH-H! THERE'S... THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE IT!

SUDDENLY FROM THE HIDDEN DEPTHS OF THE "THING" COME HUGE AND UNNATURAL CREATURES WHOSE BEAST-LIKE SNARLS SPEAK ONLY OF SUDDEN DEATH!...
AIEE-EEE!
NO! NO! IT COULDN'T BE!
SEIZE THEM!

WH-WHO... WHAT ARE YOU??
WE ARE CREATURES OF ANOTHER WORLD RELEASED BY THE ENERGY OF YOUR ATOM BOMB EXPLOSIONS IN THIS DESERT! WE HAVE COME FOR ONE PURPOSE---

--TO DESTROY THE EARTH PEOPLE SO THAT NO OTHER CREATURES SUCH AS WE SHALL BE RELEASED IN THE UNIVERSE! YOUR PLANET SHALL CRUMBLE TO DUST IN OUR FINGERS!
NO!! YOU CAN'T DO THIS!! YOU CAN'T!

KILL HIM!
NO.... ARGH-H!
ROWRR-R!

SUDDENLY--WITH THE WILD DESPERATION OF TERROR--THE SECOND MINER FLEES DOWN THE BURNING SAND...
YOU'LL NEVER GET ME!! NEVER!
LET HIM GO-HE WILL NOT ESCAPE THE FATE OF HIS FELLOW HUMANS!

AFTER LONG HOURS OF FRANTIC FLIGHT, THE MINER ARRIVES IN THE CITY--TO WARN THE PEOPLE OF IMPENDING DISASTER!
--LISTEN TO ME--YOU MUST LISTEN--THEY'RE COMING TO DESTROY US!! THEY WERE RELEASED BY ATOMIC ENERGY--LISTEN!!
WHO'S THE OLD CRACKPOT?
THEY'VE GOT TO BELIEVE ME, OFFICER--THESE MONSTERS --THEY'RE LIKE MOLES IN HUMAN SHAPE--AND THEY KILLED JIM!--
RUN ALONG, OLD TIMER OR I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU IN!
WHAT CAN I DO?? HOW CAN I--MAYBE IF I WENT TO THE ATOMIC RESEARCH LABORATORIES--THEY'D UNDERSTAND... YES!!
...AND THEY SAID THEY HAD COME HERE TO DESTROY THE EARTH SO THAT NO MORE CREATURES LIKE THEM WOULD BE RELEASED--
AND YOU SAY THEY LOOKED LIKE MOLES...HUMAN MOLES??
WHAT DO YOU THINK, DOCTOR LUCAS? IS HE TELLING THE TRUTH?
I THINK WE SHOULD ISSUE A GENERAL WARNING IF WE LOSE MORE TIME, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT MONSTROUS THINGS---
AS FEAR STRIKES LIKE A CHILL AND OMINOUS WIND, THE AIR IS ABRUPTLY PIERCED BY A SHRIEK OF NUMBING HORROR--
GOOD LORD!! WHAT'S THAT?
NO! NO! IT IT COULDN'T BE

OBLIVIOUS TO FIRE OR BULLETS, THE MOLE-MEN CONTINUE THEIR MAD AND BLOODY RAMPAGE THROUGH THE CITY... UNTIL TERROR GNAWS AT EVEN THE STRONGEST MINDS!

WITHIN THE NEXT FEW HOURS, THE LABORATORY BECOMES A SCENE OF FEVERISH AND VERY DESPERATE ACTIVITY--

AND LATE THAT EVENING A STRANGE TASK FORCE APPROACHES THE CAMP OF THE ENEMY---

ATTACK!

WITH THE EARTH'S BATTLE CRY RINGING IN THE NIGHT THE FURIOUS BATTLE BEGINS WHICH WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF MAN...
YARRGH-H!
DIE, MONSTER!

L-LOOK! THEY--THEY JUST EXPLODE WHEN THE SPEARS TOUCH THEM!
IT WORKS!

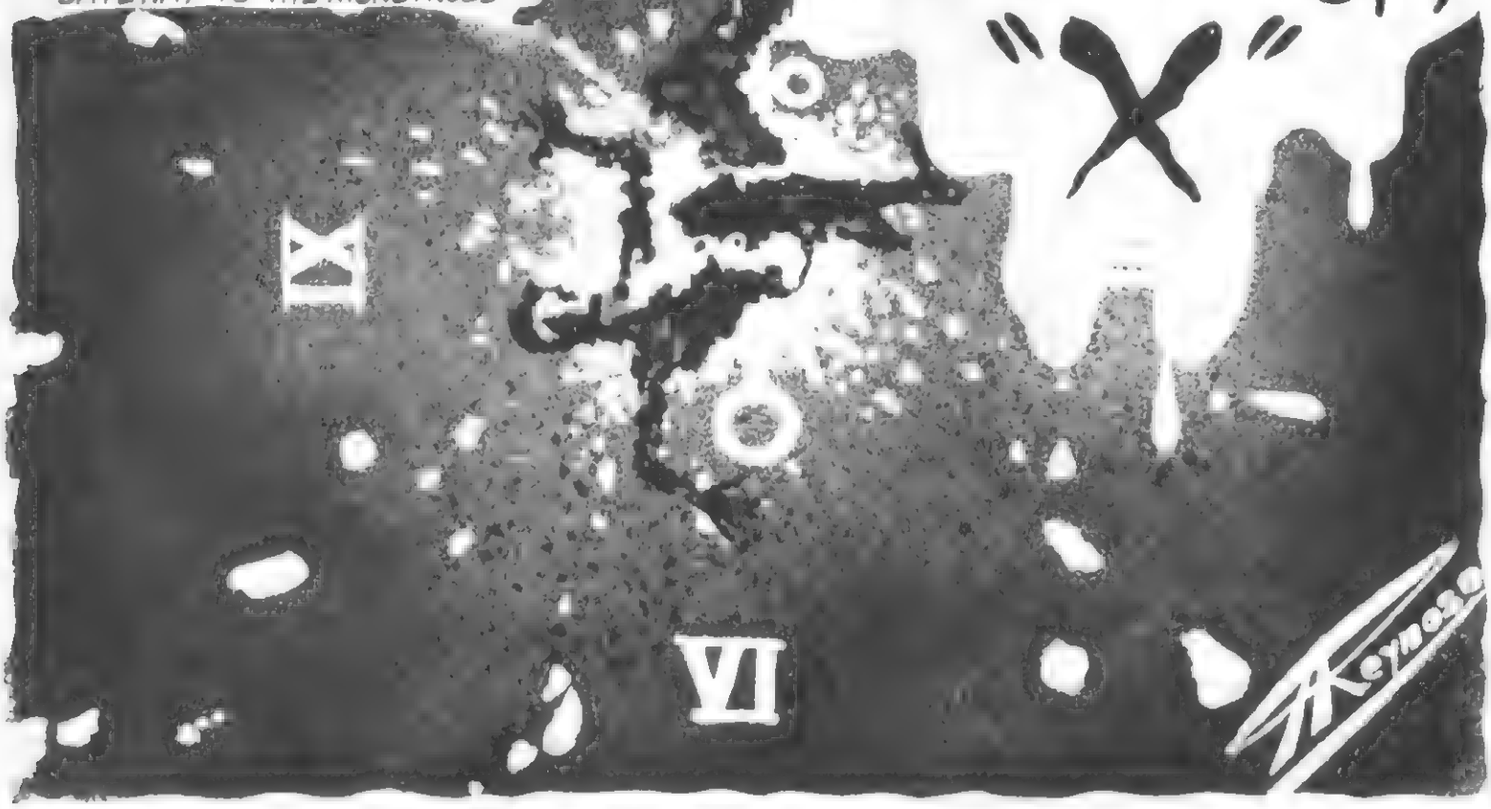
AS THE BATTLE CONTINUES, EACH MOLE-MAN THAT MEETS THE POINT OF A SPEAR BECOMES A SHATTERED MASS OF FETID FLESH--A RUIN OF HORROR!
WE'VE WON! THEY'RE DYING OFF!
DON'T LET ONE OF THEM ESCAPE.

THE CITY IS SAVED! THE EARTH IS FREE OF THE MOLE-MEN!
DOCTOR LUCAS IS OUR HERO! CHEERS FOR DOCTOR LUCAS

BUT AS THE SHOUTS OF TRIUMPH REACH THE DOCTOR'S EARS A THOUGHT FILLS HIS MIND WITH A VAGUE BUT PERSISTANT FEAR THAT CANNOT BE STIFLED...
THE EARTH IS FREE... BUT THERE WILL BE NEW ATOMIC EXPLOSIONS AND THEN-- WHAT NEW CREATURES WILL BE RELEASED? I MUSTN'T THINK OF THAT--I MUSTN'T...I MUSTN'T!
THE END

VAMPIRES FROM DIMENSION "X"

HIRAM CASTLE LOVED TO COLLECT CLOCKS! AN INNOCENT PASTIME... YOU MIGHT THINK! YET IT WAS A CLOCK THAT BROUGHT HIM FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE ULTIMATE IN HORROR... A CLOCK THAT WAS THE GATEWAY TO THE MONSTROUS



IT WAS LATE AT NIGHT WHEN DETECTIVE SAM JEFFERS CALLED HIRAM CASTLE, TELLING HIM TO JOIN HIM AT A NONDESCRIPT ROOMING HOUSE! ...

OFFICER CASEY HEARD A SCREAM, RUSHED UP HERE AND FOUND HIM JUST LIKE THIS! THERE WAS THIS SCRAWLED NOTE, TOO...
LET ME SEE IT, SAM!

JUST A FEW WORDS... BUT THEY WERE TO LEAD TO A HORROR BEYOND BELIEF...
IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!
The clock... the thirteenth stroke...

THE MENTION OF A CLOCK IN THE STRANGE NOTE AROUSED HIRAM CASTLE'S INTEREST! HE'D ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN CLOCKS... AND WAS CONSTANTLY ON THE LOOKOUT FOR NEW ONES TO ADD TO HIS COLLECTION!
THIS MUST BE THE CLOCK HE WAS WRITING ABOUT! THERE IS SOMETHING ODD ABOUT IT!
SURE IS! IT'S BEEN GIVING ME THE HEEBIE JEEBIES EVER SINCE I WALKED IN HERE!
I'D LIKE TO OWN IT! THOUGH... I KNOW JUST THE SPOT IN MY HOUSE WHERE IT COULD BE PLACED!

IF THAT POOR GUY HAS NO HEIRS AND DIDN'T LEAVE A WILL, YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO BUY THAT CLOCK AT PUBLIC AUCTION... BUT IT SEEMS TO ME YOU HAVE ENOUGH CLOCKS IN YOUR PLACE!
THAT PARTICULAR ONE INTRIGUES ME, SAM! I DON'T KNOW WHY... BUT IT DOES!

MANY DAYS LATER WHEN THE TWO FRIENDS MET AGAIN...
SO YOU DID BUY IT, AFTER ALL! I HOPE YOU'RE NOT A SUPERSTICIOUS GUY, BUT...
STOP TRYING TO FRIGHTEN ME, SAM! IF I DISAPPEAR IN A CLOUD OF SMOKE I'LL LET YOU KNOW!

HIRAM CASTLE CARRIED HIS PRIZE HOME VERY CAREFULLY, NOT KNOWING HE WAS HOLDING HIS FATE IN HIS HANDS! LATER...AS HE WAS READY TO GO TO BED...

THIS OUGHT TO BE A GOOD PLACE FOR IT... RIGHT HERE!

THE TICKING OF THE STRANGE CLOCK GREW LOUDER AND LOUDER UNTIL ITS SOUND FILLED THE ENTIRE ROOM!

I HOPE I'LL BE ABLE TO SLEEP WITH ALL THAT NOISE! IF I WEREN'T SO TIRED, I'D MOVE IT NOW!

TICK TICK TICK TICK TICK

A FITFULL TOSSING SLEEP FINALLY CAME...AND OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF THE ROOM A STRANGE GLOW BEGAN TO FORM...

I--I REMEMBER YOU! YOU'RE THE MAN WHO OWNED THE CLOCK! BUT...BUT YOU'RE DEAD! YOU CAN'T BE HERE!

...AN URGENCY PENETRATED HIS CONSCIOUSNESS... PULLING...DEMANDING...UNTIL, AT LAST, HE OPENED HIS EYES...

THE CLOCK! DESTROY THE CLOCK!

WHO...WHAT... HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

YES... IT WAS A DEAD FACE... BUT A FACE STILL STIFF WITH FRIGHT!

GET RID OF THE CLOCK BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! YOU MUST... YOU MUST...

I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE CLOCK? WHY MUST I DESTROY IT?
BECAUSE YOU... AGH-H-H-H!

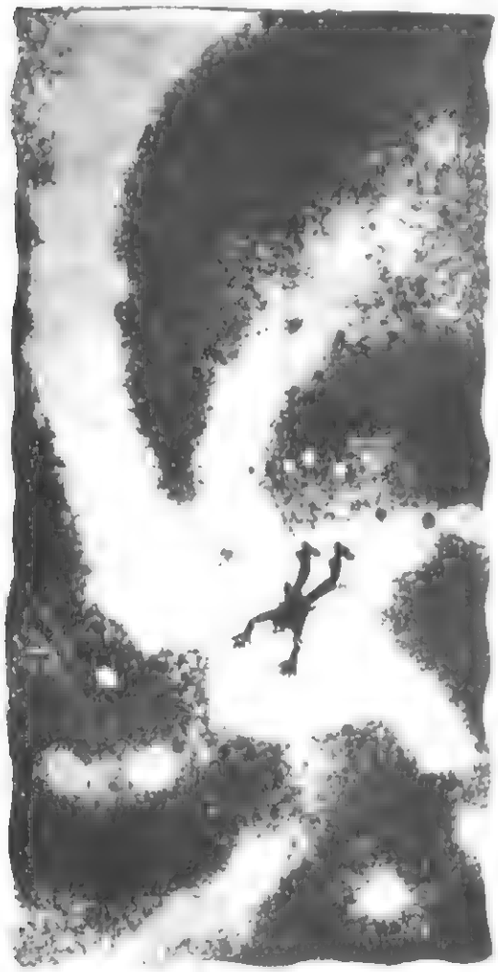
The APPARITION WRITHED IN AGONY AND THEN... DISAPPEARED IN A SEARING LIGHT THAT HAD A FORCE THAT CATAPULTED HIRAM BACKWARDS UPON HIS BED...

LONG MINUTES LATER...
THERE'S NO ONE HERE! I--I MUST HAVE BEEN DREAMING! YES...THAT'S WHAT IT WAS... A DREAM!

BUT DREAM OR NO DREAM... CASTLE FOUND FURTHER SLEEP AN IMPOSSIBILITY! HE LAY IN BED... LISTENING TO THE CLOCK, COUNTING THE HOUR SOUNDED..
EIGHT... NINE...TEN... ELEVEN...
BONG!
BONG!

...TWELVE-- THIRTEEN! THE CLOCK STRUCK THIRTEEN TIMES!!
BONG
BONG
BONG

And ALMOST AT THE SAME INSTANT AS THE THIRTEENTH STROKE SOUNDED, HIRAM CASTLE FELT HIS BODY TORN BY A TREMENDOUS VIBRATION! A SEARING PAIN FILLED HIM, AND THE ROOM WHIRLED AND TURNED ABOUT HIM!
THE...THIRTEENTH... STROKE!!!


THE AGONY WAS INCREDIBLE!!! AND THEN THE TERRIBLE SENSATION OF FALLING... ENDLESSLY...

And...
MY HEAD! I FEEL AS THOUGH I HAD DIED A THOUSAND DEATHS!

WHAT HAPPENED TO MY BEDROOM? WHERE AM I? THIS... STRANGE PLACE... NOTHING AT ALL HERE! ONLY THAT GLOBE OVERHEAD!

THE BRIGHT LIGHT GLARED MERCILESSLY DOWN, AND AS CASTLE LOOKED AROUND HIM THERE WAS A STIRRING IN THE AIR.. A SWIRLING MISTINESS THAT EMANATED FROM THE GROUND... AND TOOK FORM!
I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- THESE... THESE STRANGE SHAPES! I... I MUST BE... DREAMING...

THEN, HE WAS SURROUNDED BY MONSTROUS, EVIL LOOKING BEINGS THAT GATHERED AROUND HIM WITH HUNGRY... OUTSTRETCHED ARMS REACHING FOR HIM...
IT CAN'T BE! STAY AWAY FROM ME! STAY AWAY!

GET BACK! YOU MUST NOT TOUCH HIM! NOT YET! NOT YET!
WH-- WHERE AM I?

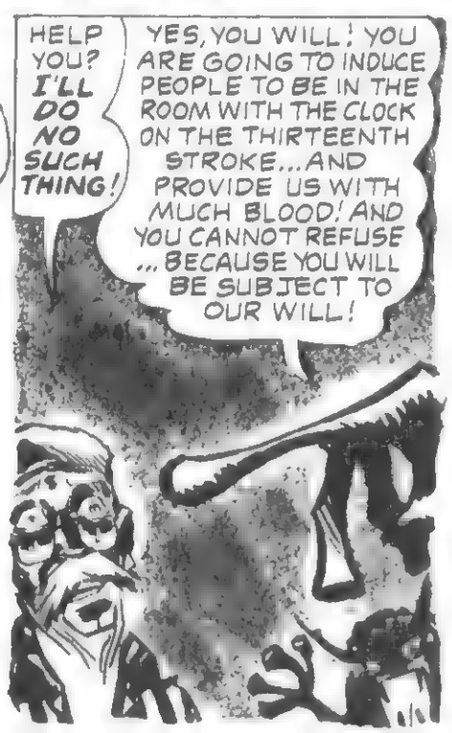
DO YOU NOT KNOW? YOU HAVE COME TO US THROUGH THE CLOCK... THE GATEWAY TO OUR PLANE OF EXISTENCE! WE LIVE ON THE BLOOD OF THOSE WHO ARE TRANSPORTED HERE BY THE THIRTEENTH STROKE!

THIS IS FANTASTIC! YOU'RE A LIAR!
FANTASTIC... YOU SAY? LOOK BEHIND YOU!

HIRAM CASTLE WHIRLED... HIS SENSES STILL DAZED BY HIS UNBELIEVABLE EXPERIENCE!
MEN...HUMAN MEN-- BUT YOU'RE ALL... ALL...
DEAD! WE ARE DEAD... VICTIMS OF THESE EVIL THINGS!

YOU...YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TRIED TO WARN ME... THE ONE WHO OWNED THE CLOCK BEFORE I DID!
WE'RE DOOMED... DOOMED TO WANDER HERE UNTIL THE CLOCK IS DESTROYED! YOU MUST HELP US... HELP US--

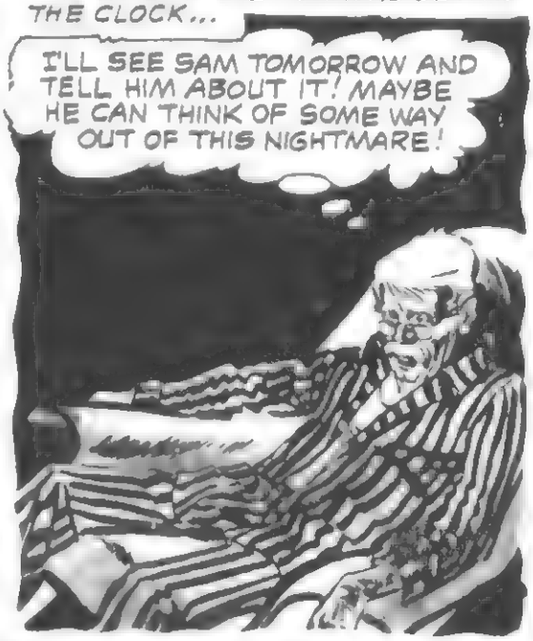
A NIGHTMARE COME TO LIFE! CASTLE STILL DIDN'T BELIEVE THIS WAS HAPPENING TO HIM...
I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY! YOU CAN'T KEEP ME HERE!
THERE IS NO ESCAPE! WE ARE GOING TO SEND YOU BACK TO YOUR OWN WORLD SO YOU CAN HELP US!


HELP YOU? I'LL DO NO SUCH THING!
YES, YOU WILL! YOU ARE GOING TO INDUCE PEOPLE TO BE IN THE ROOM WITH THE CLOCK ON THE THIRTEENTH STROKE...AND PROVIDE US WITH MUCH BLOOD! AND YOU CANNOT REFUSE ...BECAUSE YOU WILL BE SUBJECT TO OUR WILL!

RETURN TO YOUR WORLD!
I WON'T DO IT! I WON'T... AH-H-H-H!
BRING US MUCH BLOOD!

THE TORTUROUS STRAIN OF THE VIBRATIONS, AND CASTLE FOUND HIMSELF ONCE AGAIN IN HIS BEDROOM! ONE THOUGHT WAS UPPERMOST IN HIS MIND!
THE CLOCK! I'LL DESTROY THE CLOCK!

I--I WANT TO, BUT I-- I CAN'T! SOME FORCE WON'T LET ME!


HIRAM WAS HELPLESS TO OVERCOME THE WILL OF THE HORRORS BEYOND THE CLOCK...
I'LL SEE SAM TOMORROW AND TELL HIM ABOUT IT! MAYBE HE CAN THINK OF SOME WAY OUT OF THIS NIGHTMARE!

THE NEXT EVENING, CASTLE HAD DINNER WITH HIS BEST FRIEND, SAM JEFFERS!
OKAY, HIRAM... SPILL IT! WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING!
Y-YES... IT'S ABOUT A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE I HAD!

And THEN, THE ULTIMATE HORROR... CASTLE FOUND HIMSELF UNABLE TO TELL JEFFERS OF HIS EXPERIENCE! INSTEAD... WORDS HE DIDN'T WANT TO SAY CAME TUMBLING FROM HIS TREMBLING LIPS!
WHY... WHY DON'T YOU COME TO MY PLACE TONIGHT, SAM? SPEND THE EVENING WITH ME!
DOESN'T SOUND LIKE A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE TO ME! I'D BE GLAD TO COME!

THAT EVENING...
IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT, SAM! HOW ABOUT COMING INTO MY BEDROOM? I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING!
SURE THING, HIRAM!

YOU'RE ACTING SO STRANGELY, HIRAM! ...STARTING TO SAY SOMETHING... AND THEN STOP...
YES... I DO WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING... ABOUT THE CLOCK! COME, LOOK AT IT MORE CLOSELY!

LOOKS THE SAME AS IT EVER DID!
LISTEN TO IT! TEN... ELEVEN... TWELVE...
BONG BONG BONG

AND THEN...
THE THIRTEENTH STROKE!
BANG!

THE TWISTING AND TURNING...AND...
WHAT HAPPENED, HIRAM? WHAT... WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?
I-- I CAN TELL YOU! MY WILL IS FREE AGAIN, NOW THAT I'M BACK HERE!

AT LAST, CASTLE WAS ABLE TO EXPLAIN THE HORRIBLE THING HE HAD DONE!
THEIR WILL FORCED ME TO BRING YOU HERE! THEY'LL DESTROY YOU... AND I'LL HAVE TO GO BACK AND GET OTHERS! -- AND THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO... NOTHING!!
I HAVE A GUN! THAT MIGHT HELP!

And THEN... THERE APPEARED THE DEAD... THE LOST SOULS...
WHAT?
HELP US! RELEASE US BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

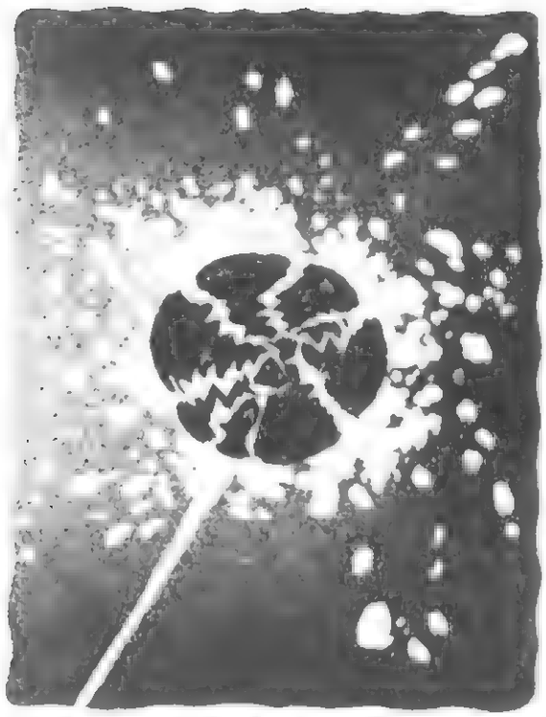
I BROUGHT THEM MANY VICTIMS, TOO: BUT WHEN I COULD STAND IT NO LONGER, AND FOUGHT AGAINST THEIR WILL, THEY KILLED ME! THEY'LL DO THE SAME TO YOU... UNLESS YOU DESTROY THE CLOCK!
BUT HOW?

BUT BEFORE THE ANSWER COULD BE GIVEN...
THE SHINING GLOBE!
THE HORRORS! LOOK...THEY'RE COMING!
WE'LL TRY TO RUN FOR IT!

THE TWO MEN RAN...GASPING FOR BREATH... SMELLING EVIL THINGS CLOSE TO THEIR HEELS!
HURRY-- FASTER!

IT-- GASP-- IT'S HOPELESS! THERE'S NO PLACE...GASP... TO HIDE! WE CAN'T GET AWAY!
THE GLOBE...GASP... THE DEAD MAN... SAID SOMETHING ...GASP...ABOUT THE SHINING GLOBE! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!

IT WAS A FORLORN HOPE, BUT... JEFFERS FIRED...
WE WILL HAVE RICH BLOOD!
THIS MUST WORK!
BANG!



THE SHOT PENETRATED THE GLOBE, SHATTERING IT! INSTANTLY THERE WAS A BATTERING EXPLOSION... CRASHING AGAINST THEM, SENDING THEM HURTLING THROUGH SPACE...

THEN..

TH-THEY'RE GONE! WE'RE BACK IN YOUR ROOM AGAIN!

I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED!

THE--THE CLOCK... LOOK AT IT!

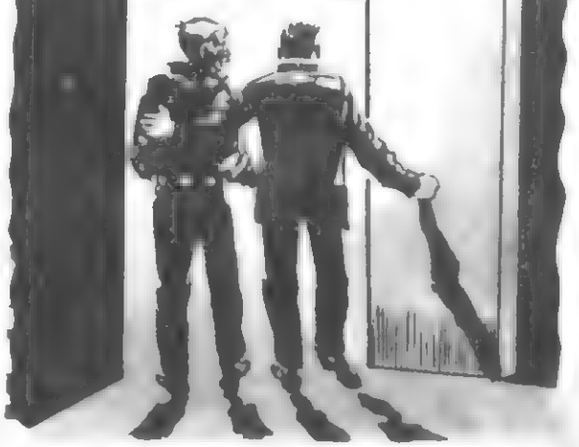
BUT IS THAT **REALLY** SO? THIS IS A LARGE WORLD, MY FRIENDS, AND THERE ARE **MANY** CLOCKS IN IT! ANY ONE OF THEM MAY BE **ANOTHER GATEWAY TO HORROR**! JUST BE CAREFUL, DEAR READER--- LISTEN TO YOUR CLOCK... THE NEXT TIME IT STRIKES... LISTEN FOR THE **THIRTEENTH STROKE**!

IT'S SHATTERED! **DESTROYED** AND THERE'S A BULLET IN IT! BUT HOW?

DON'T YOU SEE THAT'S **MY** BULLET! THE GLOBE MUST'VE BEEN THE PROJECTION OF THE CLOCK IN THAT OTHER PLANE!

WHEN YOU DESTROYED THE SHINING GLOBE, YOU DESTROYED THE CLOCK!

YES... THE GATEWAY TO THE HORROR IS GONE... AND THE LOST SOULS ARE RELEASED! I THINK WE HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, HIRAM!



THE GHOST CLIENT

■ It was with deep relief that Theron Slocum fell into the easy-chair before his library fire. After two weeks of slavish delving, night and day, he had finished the preparation of the plantiff's case in Gormley *vs* Glendinning.

As Slocum's eyes rested upon the glowing bank of red coals he felt as if Nirvana could bring no finer joy than this consciousness of good work faithfully done. Dreamily he heard the tinkling chime of the quarter past midnight. Then—oh, too ridiculous! Yet as he tried to give himself once more to reverie he distinctly heard again an apologetic cough behind him.

"Out with you! How did you get in here?" he exclaimed as he whirled toward a thin man, very tall, and with a face the color of ashes, who stood regarding him mournfully. Slocum's hand grasped at the man's shoulder and swept through empty air. He staggered. He could feel his hair spring erect and bristle as a clump of dry sedge He could not articulate.

"Pardon this intrusion," said the stranger, "but I've come to ask you to take my case. I have no card, but you may put down in your diary tomorrow that the ghost of Clark Dryden has called upon you."

Slocum's heart began to beat again. The necessity of impressing a client revived him. He lit a cigar. The late Dryden inhaled the fumes gratefully.

"The only way we ghost can enjoy tobacco," he explained, "is by getting to leeward of a live smoker. Let me tell you the saddest instance of treachery you have ever heard. I want you to sue Teunis G. Shard for $10,000 for professional services. Please don't interrupt me. My claims is quite regular. I worked for him —worked hard, too—as a haunter. He cheated me.

"Mr. Slocum, Shard is the worst man on Earth. I was his confident clerk for ten years. When he found a little shortage in my accounts he held it over me like a whip, and made me work for small wages: he and drink soon made an end of me. The first midnight I was allowed to revisit Earth I crept up behind him just as he turned off the lights in his bedroom, and I uttered the most awful moan I could manage. What do you think the old brute did? He laughed at me. He knew my voice.

" 'Don't go 'way mad, Dryden,' the old robber said to me. 'I think we can do some business. How'd you like a little drink?'

"Now you see, Mr. Slocum, the only way we ghosts can drink is to inhale the fumes of burning alcohol. I was just dying—Well, I mean, I wanted a drink pretty badly. The old fellow must have seen me jump, for he lit the lamp of a chafing-dish and went on:

" 'You and I can do a neat turn in real estate, and I'll supply you with drink. You know the Shepherd place in Montvale, on the Gun Hill road? Shepherd has built him a new house at Montclair and the ald one's on the market. I've offered him $18,500 for it, but he wants $25,000. You go over there and groam and meander through the place a few nights, and I guess he'll be glad to let it go for $15,000.'

"I don't try to excuse what I did; but please remember I needed a drink more than anything else in the world—the next world.

Old Shard promised to reward me with half a pint of flaming alcohol every night, and I fell into the bargain.

"My efforts were successful. Mrs. Shepherd saw me first, and her screams woke her husband, and I wailed, and he dived into a wardrobe and pinched his fingers in the door in his hurry to lock it. Then old Shard dropped in casually next day, and Shepherd was glad to seel out to him for $13,500.

"Shard sold the house in less than three months for $20,000. First he ordered me to quit haunting. Then he coaxed the Psychical Research committee to investigate, gave 'em punch and supper for three or four nights—that stood him in only $80 or $90—and got their written certificate that there was no ghost on the place.

"Within three years I wrecked more happy homes than any other individual you ever heard of. Plaindale, Somerville, Montclair, Morristown, and all the Oranges were my stamping-ground. Old Shard went around picking up property for half its value and selling it soon afterward at a big advance. He was deep enough not to let me wreck two homes in one town, so no one suspected him. He used to give me my flaming half-pint of alcohol at three o'clock every morning as I was on my way home from a hard night's haunting, groaning, and clanking. Clank? Certainly. Next time I call on you I'll bring over the clanker I've invented. It is far more terrifying than all the old ancestral gyves and common chain clankers you ever heard of.

"When Shard had made enough money out of me to thrust himself into a lumber company and the silk business, and get himself made president of the Plaindale First National Bank, he deserted me. Said it was dangerous to burn alcohol in his library at that time of night. Think of it, Mr. Slocum—that man's made $138,000 out of me, and he's cut off my alcohol! You go ahead and sue him for $10,000 for my professional services."

"But, my dear sir," said Slocum, who was now puffing comfortably at his cigar, and had forgotten that he was talking with a ghost—"my dear sir, this is all very irregular—decidedly interesting, but highly irregular. I couldn't think of going into such a case."

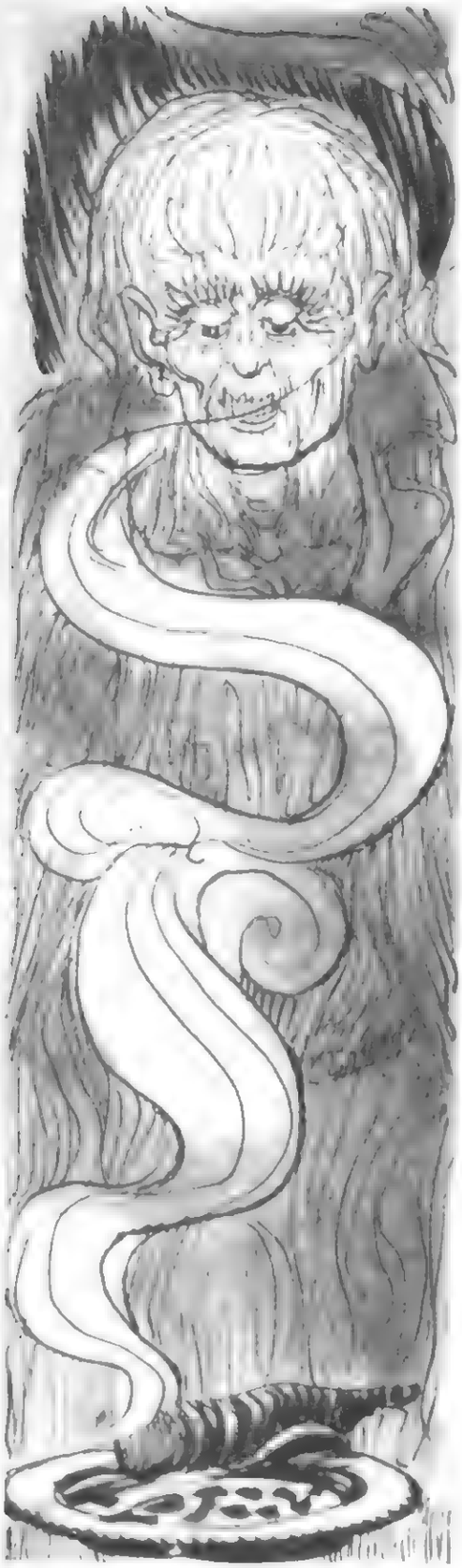
"You won't?" exclaimed the ghost. "Why, your balance at the bank is down to two hundred dollars or less. You owe the tailer, the butcher, the baker. You need the money—"

"Get out! Run away, or I'll scatter you!" cried Slocum, who had now lost all sense of fear. The ghost involuntarily leaped back, but soon advanced again.

"You take my case," he wailed, "or I'll haunt your wife into hysterics. You don't think you can convince her I'm harmless, do you? You've tried explaining things to your wife, haven't you? Ha, ha! Just wait till she hears me gibber!"

Slocum surrendered. Before he fell asleep he had roughly drafted a method of action.

Teunis G. Shard, expanded from a man of mean affairs in New Jersey to an unscrupulous man of affairs in New York, sat in his Pine Street office. His secretary handed him a letter, saying it seemed new and important,



and discreetly withdrew. He had read only one line when he bounded out of his chair with an agility surprising in one of his bulk, and snapped the latches of both doors of his private office. Then he read carefully the letter, which was from Theron Slocum.

"Clark Dryden's claim," the lawyer write, "for $10,125.55 for professional services rendered to you has been placed in my hands for collection. He claims to have assisted you in acquiring certain parcels of real estate, on which the commission due are set forth in the schedule I enclose. If the claim is not settled forthwith, I shall feel obliged to begin an action to recover the commissions."

Can Dryden recover? thought Shard. Surely not. How can a ghost sue or get judgment? A ghost is not a person. The Thing clearly had been able to consult counsel — the schedule showed that. But how could a ghost testify in court, when his hours on earth were limited from midnight to cockcrow? With a groan Shard remembered that Judge Deane, who presided in his district, was a member of the Psychical Society, and would hold sessions of court at any hour to hear evidence against him.

There was nothing for Shard to do but call on the ghost's lawyer. He hated lawyers—they took none of the risks and they always got part of the profits.

"Tell Mr. Slocum I must see him at once. Tell him it's Mister Shard!" roared a bullying voice on the sixteenth floor of the Warren Arcade building.

"Ask the gentleman to come in," was Mr. Slocum's reply.

Mr. Shard entered and slammed the door. Then, with his best bullying, apoplectic manner, "How dare you, sir?" he began, shaking the lawyer's letter high in air. "How dare you—"

"Mr. Shard," interrupted the lawyer, with a calmness that was wonderful when we consider his straits—"Mr. Shard, if you want a bill of particular in this action, you had better let your attorney apply for it in the regular way. I am prepared to give every detail."

Only too well the financier understood. Great beads came out on his brow.

"I—I'll make you a proposition," he stammered. "I'll pay your client $5,000 and take his general release."

"That's something," mused Theron, with great gravity; "still, I wouldn't miss the fun of trying this case for any consideration. I am moved, I must admit, by the spectacle of suffering respectability that you present. I will do this: I will accept $7,000 iln settlement of my client's just claim. I am his attorney in fact as well as at law, and I can give you your general release at once."

Teunis G. Shard hastily drew a checkbook from his pocket, filled out a form and signed it—not without a groan—and handed it to the lawyer. Slocum, in turn, filled all the blanks in a formidable-looking document, which to this day witnesseth that Clark Dryden, late of the State of New Jersey, doth release the said Teunis G. Shard, of the State of New Jersey, him and his heirs and assigns forever, of any and all claims of whatsoever kind and of whatsoever cause arising. When it was signed, the financier read it and put it in his pocket.

Success burned in Slocum like a fever until Saturday night. For two hours before midnight he sat in his tiny library. Then he turned off the gas and lit the lamp of the chafing-dish, and instantly became aware of his friend Dryden hovering over the wavering blue, gold-threaded flame and murmuring: "Here's how!" For minutes the shade enjoyed the shaking of his posthumous thirst.

"How's our suit?" he asked at last.

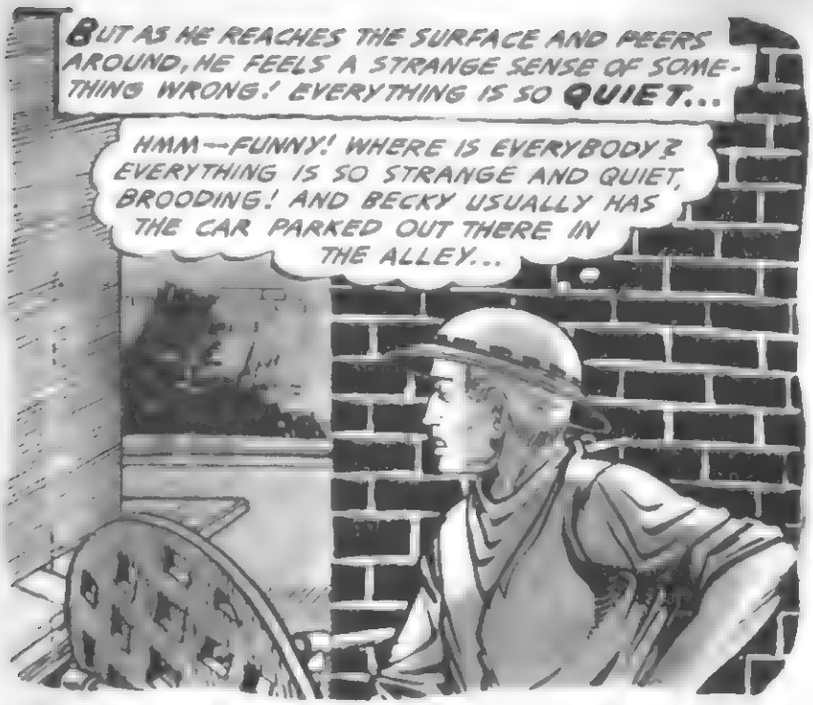
"Settled out of court for this," replied Theron, tossing the check on a table remote from the alcohol.

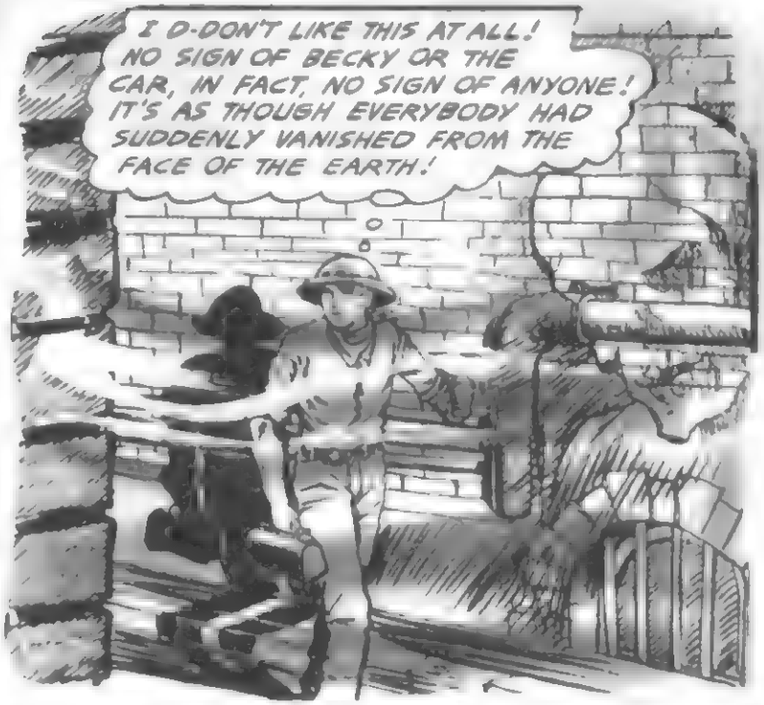
"Um-m-m! You're a wonder," cried the ghost. "Well, you can keep the money. It's no use to me, you know. All I ask is one half-pint of alcohol every Monday night for three months and two nights. By that time I hope to get the better of the habit. Is it a bargain?"

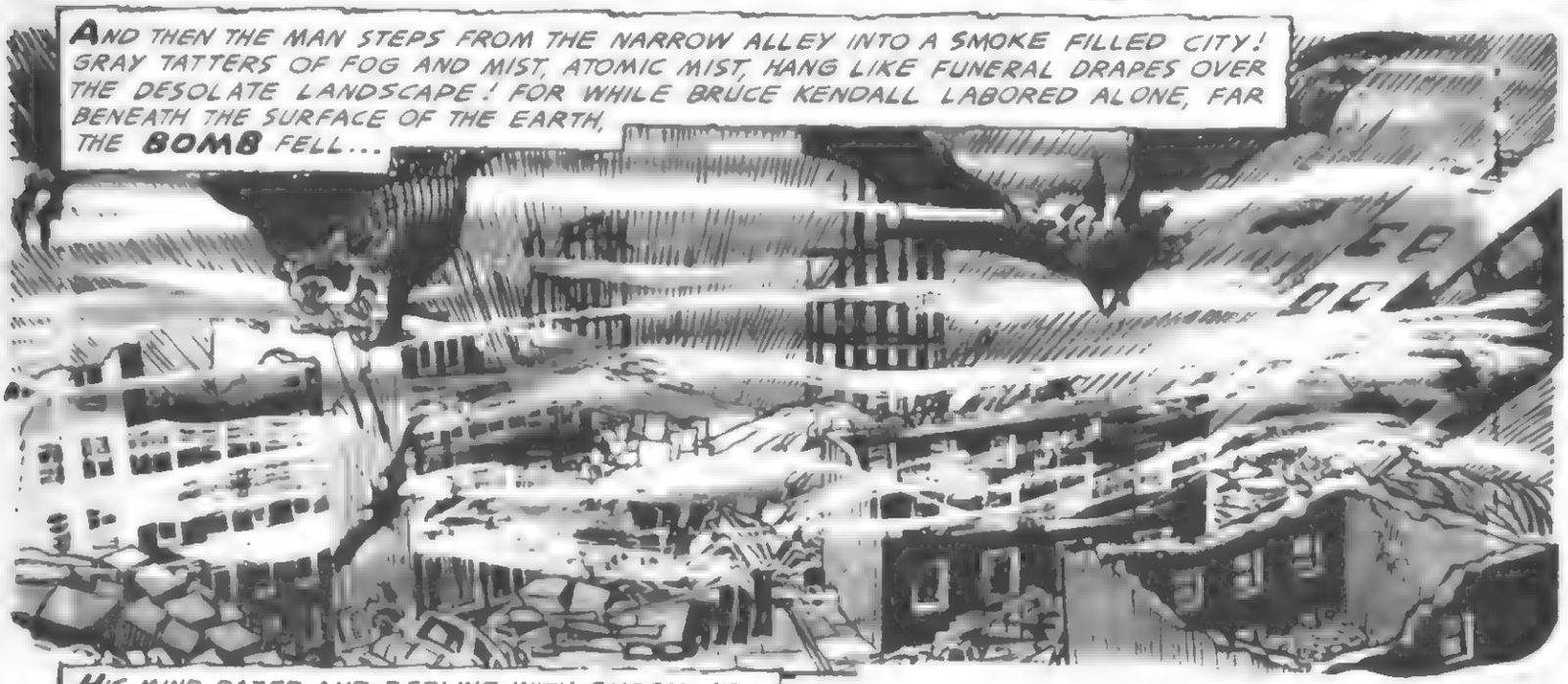
"Surest thing in the world," replied Theron, lighting a Carolina perfect for his own and his disembodied client's benefit, and presently regarding him over a tinkling glass in which was an exhibition of something Scotch and mellow: "Surest thing in the world. Dryden, here's to you!" ●

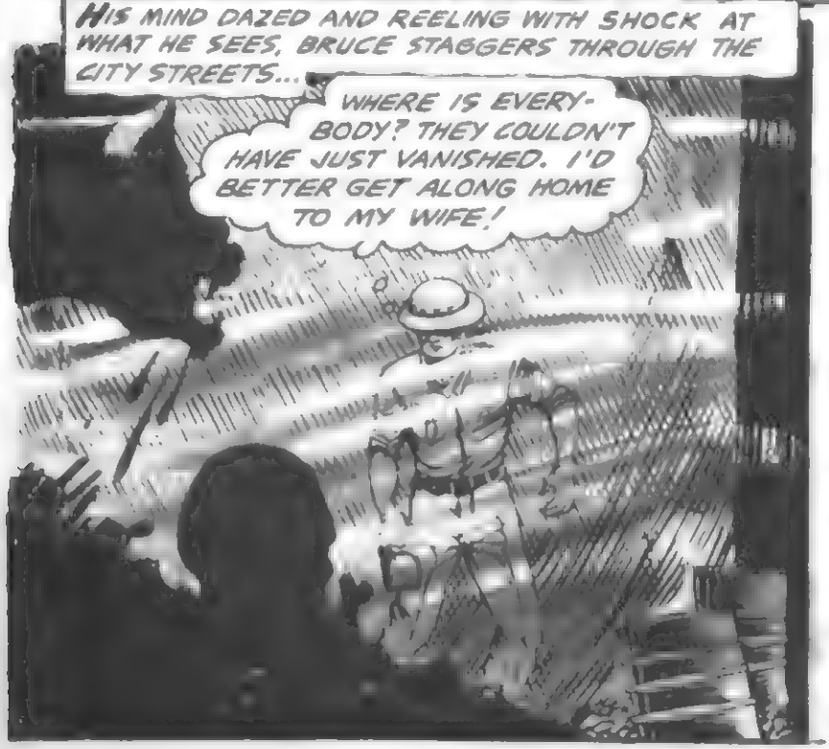
HERE IS A FANTASY! THIS NEVER HAPPENED AND NEVER COULD HAPPEN... BUT YOU CAN'T CONVINCE ONE MAN, BRUCE KENDALL! HE INSISTS THIS REALLY TOOK PLACE AND SO WE'RE GOING TO LET YOU SPECULATE ON IT! IT SEEMS THAT HE CLAIMS THAT ONE DAY WE HAD QUITE AN ADVENTURE! WE WERE...

LOCKED in TIME!


BUT AS HE REACHES THE SURFACE AND PEERS AROUND, HE FEELS A STRANGE SENSE OF SOMETHING WRONG! EVERYTHING IS SO QUIET...
HMM—FUNNY! WHERE IS EVERYBODY? EVERYTHING IS SO STRANGE AND QUIET, BROODING! AND BECKY USUALLY HAS THE CAR PARKED OUT THERE IN THE ALLEY...


I D-DON'T LIKE THIS AT ALL! NO SIGN OF BECKY OR THE CAR, IN FACT, NO SIGN OF ANYONE! IT'S AS THOUGH EVERYBODY HAD SUDDENLY VANISHED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH!


AND THEN THE MAN STEPS FROM THE NARROW ALLEY INTO A SMOKE FILLED CITY! GRAY TATTERS OF FOG AND MIST, ATOMIC MIST, HANG LIKE FUNERAL DRAPES OVER THE DESOLATE LANDSCAPE! FOR WHILE BRUCE KENDALL LABORED ALONE, FAR BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH, THE BOMB FELL...


HIS MIND DAZED AND REELING WITH SHOCK AT WHAT HE SEES, BRUCE STAGGERS THROUGH THE CITY STREETS...
WHERE IS EVERYBODY? THEY COULDN'T HAVE JUST VANISHED. I'D BETTER GET ALONG HOME TO MY WIFE!

MY WIFE! WHAT IF SHE'S VANISHED, TOO? WHEN COULD THIS DREADFUL THING HAVE HAPPENED? OR PERHAPS I'M JUST DREAMING IT...

IN A DAZE, BRUCE KENDALL WANDERS TOWARD WHAT WAS HIS HOME...
I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF IT WAS HERE... MY SENSE OF DIRECTION SEEMS ALL CONFUSED! BUT I'VE GOT TO FIND MY WAY HOME!
NOTHING BUT SILENCE EVERYWHERE! AND NO SIGN OF MY WIFE! IT'S HOPELESS! SHE'S GONE AND I'M ALONE! ALL ALONE, FOREVER!
SUDDENLY A WIND RISES AND BRUCE NOTICES THE SMOKE CLEARING, BUT NO SOLUTION TO THE MYSTERY COMES WITH IT...
ALMOST AS IF I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT...
AND THEN, HE PAUSES, TENSE...LISTENING...YES, HE HEARS VOICES! SOME INSTINCTIVE SENSE OF STRANGE CAUTION BIDS HIM KEEP OUT OF SIGHT IN THE SHADOWS...
PEOPLE! BUT HOW STRANGE THEY ACT! AS IF IN A DAZE...
AND BRUCE BEGINS TO REALIZE WHAT HAS HAPPENED...
THE EXPLOSION-- IT LEFT THEM LIKE THAT! THEY ARE IN A STATE OF TIME SUSPENSION!
LIKE A FRIGHTENED RABBIT HE DIVES DOWN INTO A WRECKED SUBWAY ENTRANCE...
I'VE GOT TO FIGURE WHAT TO DO! THE EXPLOSION OF THE BOMB MUST HAVE REARRANGED THEIR ATOMIC STRUCTURE IN SOME WAY SO THAT THEY'VE ENTERED A REMOTE STATE!
DOWN TOWN
AND COMES UP FAR AWAY IN A LARGE PARK...
I'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO HELP THEM... TO BRING THEM BACK... BUT HOW? I'M NOT INFORMED ON SUCH THINGS ... IF ONLY I HAD SOMEONE ELSE TO WORK WITH... TO GUIDE ME... WHAT SHALL I DO?

HE RAIDS THE STORES FOR FOOD AND OTHER SUPPLIES...
ONE THING I KNOW, THEY'LL NEED ALL THE FOOD I CAN GATHER... SOMEHOW I'LL GET THEM TO EAT, THEN PERHAPS THEY'LL START THINKING RATIONALLY AGAIN...

AND SOON THE CROWD GATHERS BELOW...
SO MANY OF THEM! THERE'S NOT ENOUGH FOOD... HOW CAN I, A SIMPLE MAN, TAKE CHARGE OF SO MANY?

AS BRUCE DESCENDS TO TAKE OVER LEADERSHIP, HE SEES A FAMILIAR FACE...
BECKY! MY WIFE! SHE, TOO, IN THIS CONDITION!

THEN HE SCALES THE RUINED TOWER OF THE TALLEST BUILDING IN TOWN...
I NEED AN OBSERVATION POINT. A PLACE WHERE I CAN ATTRACT THEIR ATTENTION! I'LL WAVE MY SHIRT AND SEE IF I CAN GATHER THEM IN A GROUP...

AND THE GROUP SHOUTS TO HIM...
FOOD! FOOD! WE HUNGER!

BUT THERE IS NO LOOK OF RECOGNITION IN MRS. KENDALL'S EYES AS SHE PASSES DIRECTLY BEFORE HER HUSBAND...

LATER HE FOLLOWS HER, AS SHE WALKS ALONE THROUGH THE DESOLATE CITY...
SHE CAN HELP ME! SHE IS THE ONE PERSON I KNOW I CAN REACH AND BRING BACK! OH, BECKY...

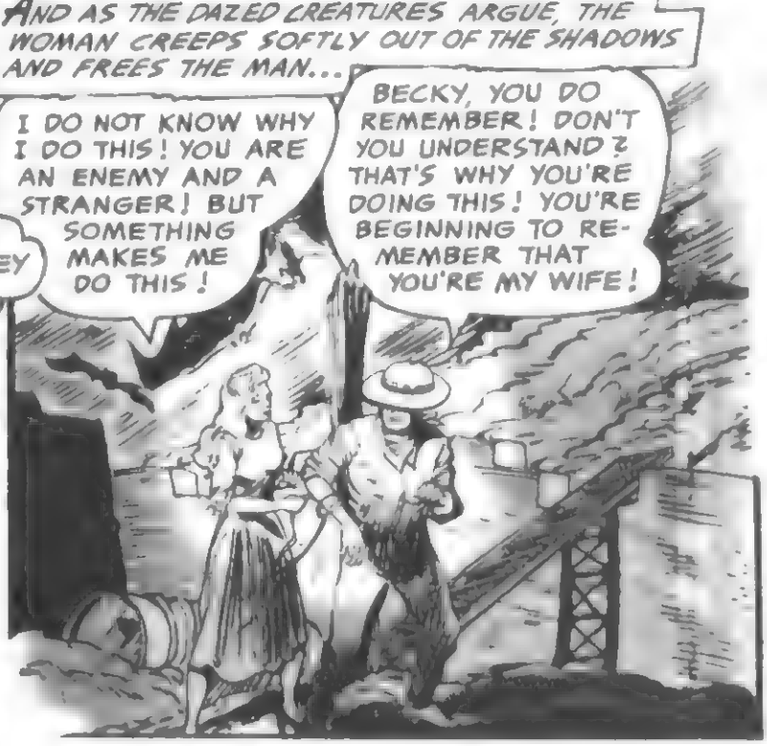
SUDDENLY THE WOMAN WHIRLS AND CONFRONTS HIM...
BECKY! DON'T YOU KNOW ME? DON'T YOU REMEMBER? IT'S BRUCE, YOUR HUSBAND!
WHO ARE YOU AND WHY DO YOU FOLLOW ME?

AS HE TRIES TO SOOTHE HER...
YOU MUST REMEMBER ME! BRUCE... I'M BRUCE! OH, BECKY... TRY TO REMEMBER!
BRUCE? THE NAME MEANS SOMETHING... BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER...

LOOK, DARLING... THIS NECKLACE... I GAVE IT TO YOU ON OUR LAST WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!

BUT SUDDENLY THE CROWDS CATCH UP TO THEM AND BRUCE CAN HARDLY BELIEVE HIS EARS AT THEIR SHOUTS...
WHO IS THIS STRANGER? HE IS FRIGHTENING THE WOMAN... SEIZE HIM...

HE IS QUICKLY BOUND, WHILE HIS CAPTORS DISCUSS THE WAY HE SHOULD BE PUNISHED...
I CANNOT REMEMBER THE LAW AND YET THERE WAS A LAW. WAS THERE NOT?
THIS IS FANTASTIC! I SHOULD BE LEADING THEM! OH, BECKY... TRY TO THINK CLEARLY... TRY...
YES... A LAW... LET US ASK THE OTHERS IF THEY CAN RECALL IT...


AND AS THE DAZED CREATURES ARGUE, THE WOMAN CREEPS SOFTLY OUT OF THE SHADOWS AND FREES THE MAN...
I DO NOT KNOW WHY I DO THIS! YOU ARE AN ENEMY AND A STRANGER! BUT SOMETHING MAKES ME DO THIS!
BECKY, YOU DO REMEMBER! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? THAT'S WHY YOU'RE DOING THIS! YOU'RE BEGINNING TO REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE MY WIFE!

BUT BECKY STILL DOES NOT KNOW HIM...
GO! DO NOT TALK! I HAVE SPARED YOUR LIFE, NOW TAKE IT AND GO! IF THEY CATCH YOU AGAIN, I CANNOT SAVE YOU!
B-BUT YOU MUST COME WITH ME, BECKY! MAYBE WE CAN ESCAPE TOGETHER! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU, TRY TO GET YOU BACK TO NORMAL!
SUDDENLY SHE IS GONE! AND ON THE GROUND...
THE NECKLACE! THE NECKLACE I GAVE HER FOR OUR ANNIVERSARY!
AS THE MAN STARES AT THE DARK SKY, HE SEES AN OMINOUS LIGHT BEGIN TO SPREAD ALONG THE HORIZON! A FIERY BALL ROLLS AND BILLOWS TOWARD HIM...
YOWWW--IT-IT'S ANOTHER EXPLOSION! ANOTHER ATOM BOMB!
AND THE WHOLE WORLD ROCKS AND SHUDDERS, AS THE MASS OF LIVING FLAME AND SMOKE ENVELOP EVERYTHING! THE DEADLY ATOMIC FOG BEGINS ONCE MORE TO ENSHROUD THE CITY...
THEN, MYSTERIOUSLY, BRUCE FINDS HIMSELF BACK IN THE SHAFT, JUST ABOUT TO FINISH WORK FOR THE DAY!
THIS IS CRAZY! I'VE SLIPPED BACK AND FORWARD IN TIME! BUT--THE RUINED CITY, THOSE CREATURES, BECKY, AND THE BOMB! IT REALLY HAPPENED UNLESS--UNLESS I'VE BEEN DREAMING!
BUT AS HE MEETS HIS WIFE AND IS DRIVEN HOME, AS USUAL, HE FINDS SOMETHING IN HIS POCKET...
THE NECKLACE! THAT PROVES IT REALLY HAPPENED! BUT BECKY DOESN'T REMEMBER! NOBODY REMEMBERS! THEY WERE LOCKED IN TIME AND NOW THEY'RE FREE! SOMEHOW THE LAST ATOM BOMB EXACTLY REVERSED THE EFFECTS OF THE FIRST! EVERYTHING IS JUST THE SAME AND I'M THE ONLY MAN WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH!
DARLING, MY NECKLACE! I THOUGHT I'D LOST IT!
The End

THE VAMPIRE CAPER

AT THE END OF THE DIMLY-LIT CORRIDOR SAT A LONE FIGURE UNAWARE OF THE TWO SHADOWS WHICH MOVED STEALTHILY TOWARD ONE OF THE CLOSED DOORS!

NOISELESSLY THE PROWLERS SLID INTO THE SMALL ROOM! ONE OF THE MEN BENT OVER . . . THE SWUNG OPEN THE HEAVY METAL DOOR! A LIGHT REVEALED THE PRECIOUS CONTENTS OF THE CABINET.

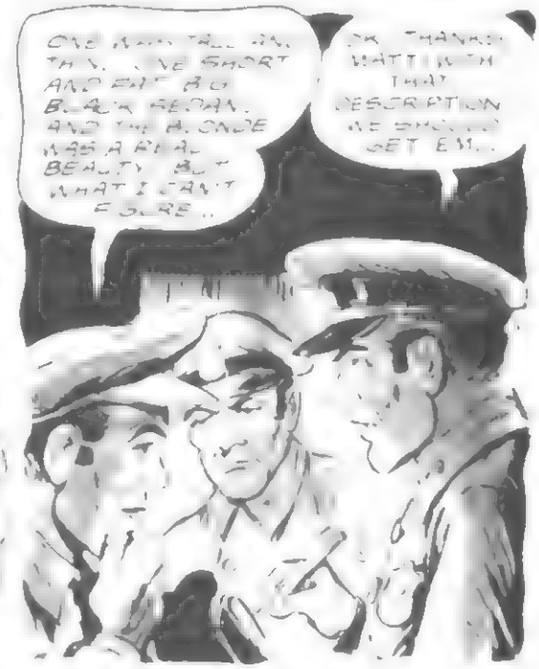
STILL UNOBSERVED THE TWO MEN SLIPPED FROM THE ROOM AND DOWN THE HALL... BUT NOW EACH CARRIED A HEAVY BOX.

OUTSIDE THE BUILDING A CAR WAITED...
YOU GOT IT, DARLING!
YES, BUT WE'RE GOING BACK FOR MORE! BE READY TO GO, MAGDA!

WAIT! STOP, THIEVES!
THE WATCHMAN! HURRY! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

THE THIEVES AND THEIR BEAUTIFUL CONFEDERATE GLOATED OVER THEIR LOOT AS THEY DROVE AWAY.
THAT DODDERING OLD IDIOT DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT US! WE'RE SAFE.. AND RICH!
THIS HAUL CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION! WE'LL BREAK A BOTTLE TONIGHT EH JOE? HA! HA!

BUT OLD MATT HAD GOTTEN A GOOD LOOK AT THE TRUCK AND AS THEY WALKED HE HAD TELL NO HIS STORY


ONE MAN TALL AND THIN, ONE SHORT AND FAT, BIG BLACK SEDAN. AND THE BLONDE WAS A REAL BEAUTY. BUT WHAT I CAN'T FIGURE..
OK. THANKS MATT. WITH THAT DESCRIPTION WE SHOULD GET EM...

LIGHTS BURNED LATE IN MILLVALE THAT NIGHT AS THE CITY OFFICIALS GOT WORD OF THE CRIME.
MEN, THIS IS A TERRIBLE THING. BUT CHIEF RAEFORD HAS THE WHOLE FORCE ON THE CASE! WE'LL HAVE THESE CROOKS BY DAYLIGHT!
WE'D BETTER MAKE SURE THAT STUFF CAN BE DANGEROUS IN THE WRONG HANDS

POLICE HEADQUARTERS WAS A HIVE OF ACTIVITY AS REPORTERS QUESTIONED CHIEF RAEFORD.
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY THE HAUL WAS WORTH CHIEF?
IT'S PRICELESS, BUT WE NEED TO RECOVER THE GOODS AND THESE RATS IN TIME FOR YOUR MORNING EDITION

BUT THE "RATS" SEEMED FAR FROM TRAPPED AS THEIR POWERFUL CAR PURRED DOWN THE HIGHWAY...
TAKE CARE OF OUR CARGO, VLADO! IT'S GOING TO PROVIDE US WITH EASY LIVING FOR A LONG TIME!
JOE, DARLING, THIS PLAN WAS SHEER GENIUS! I'VE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY!

LET'S STOP A MINUTE! I JUST WANT TO LOOK AT IT!
PATIENCE, BELOVED!

ON THE STEPS OF THE "OWL-NITE DINER" A TRUCK DRIVER LIT A CIGARETTE AND IDLY NOTED A BLACK SEDAN WHICH HAD SLOWED TO LET A TRAILER-TRUCK PULL OUT IN FRONT OF IT!
EAT

THEN, AS THE CAR PULLED AROUND THE TRUCK AND HISSED AWAY, HIS JAW DROPPED...

THE THIEVES... THAT RADIO ALARM... THEY JUST PASSED... PHONE WHERE'S THE PHONE?

A FEW MILES BEYOND THE DINER THE CAR SLOWED AGAIN— THIS TIME TO TURN DOWN A NARROW, TREE-LINED SIDE ROAD...

...AND MINUTES LATER CHIEF RAEFORD'S MEN, ALERTED BY THE TRUCK DRIVER'S TIP, SPED DOWN THE HIGHWAY... PAST THE QUIET LITTLE ROAD!
POLICE
PD

MEANWHILE, IN MILLVALE, THE OFFICIALS GREW MORE AND MORE CONCERNED!
ARE YOU SURE OF THOSE DESCRIPTIONS, MATT?
I DON'T CARE HOW TIRED YOU ARE! STAY AT THE STATION TILL SOMETHING BREAKS!
LAB REPORTS NO FINGER-PRINTS, CHIEF!
EDITOR

WEARILY, THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT, THE MAYOR ISSUED STATEMENTS!
THIS CRIME MUST NOT GO UNSOLVED THE CRIMINALS MUST BE FOUND! WE HAVE NOW ALERTED THE ENTIRE STATE!

CEASELESSLY, THE POLICE CARS COMBED EVERY ROAD... AND THEN BEGAN ALL OVER...
THEY MUST BE HOLED UP SOMEWHERE BY NOW, ED!
YEAH! WE'LL HAVE TO START BEATING THE BUSHES! THESE ROADS ARE BLOCKED SO TIGHT YOU COULDN'T GET A BICYCLE THROUGH!

OK, I'LL SEARCH THE OLD ARDMORE PLACE IF YOU'LL TAKE THE NEXT FARMHOUSE!
YOU KNOW THAT DUMP'S BEEN VACANT FOR 20 YEARS! NO SIR! WE'LL GO WAKE UP THE FARMERS AND GET YELLED AT TOGETHER!

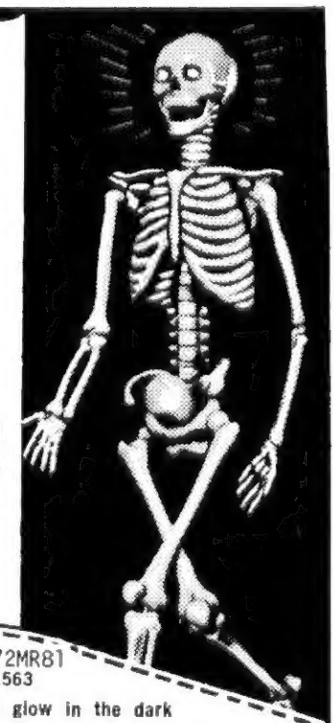
AS EACH LEAD CAME IN, CHIEF RAEFORD'S HOPES ROSE... ONLY TO BE DASHED EACH TIME!
THE SEDAN THE OLD LADY IN GAYNOR COUNTY SPOTTED TURNED OUT TO BE A BLUE CONVERTIBLE...
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT!

THE EDITOR OF THE MILLVALE TIMES SEEMED RELUCTANT TO PRINT A SENSATIONAL STORY...
THIS CRIME AFFECTS EVERYONE IN MILLVALE! WE'LL HOLD UP THE STORY TILL THE LAST MINUTE!
EDITOR

IF THE CHIEF CAN SMOKE OUT THOSE LOUSES BEFORE MORNING, MAYBE WE CAN KILL THE WHOLE STORY, BOSS!
SPEAKING OF KILLING, I'D LIKE TO GET MY HANDS ON THOSE... THOSE..

CONTINUED ON BACK COVER

MONSTER S-I-Z-E MONSTERS



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"45" AUTOMATIC

ONLY $1.00

22 Cal. Pellet Firing Automatic

FREE 50 reusable pellets and supply of targets

Fine replica of the Colt "45" automatic with realistic looking "safety" and an embossed handgrip. Fires 22 cal. pellets as fast as you can pull the trigger. Great for fast action, combat-type target practice. Your money back if not satisfied. Just send $1.00 plus 35c for shipping charges —get your pellets and targets FREE. Not sold in N.Y.C.

HONOR HOUSE Dept. 472AT81 Lynbrook, N.Y. 11563

22 CAL. PELLET FIRING "STINGER AUTOMATIC"

1.00

50 22 CAL. PELLETS FREE
Looks and Feels Like Real Pocket Automatic — Loads 15 Shots

Fires 22 cal. pellets just as fast as you can pull the trigger. Great for fast action combat-type target practice. 50 re-usable 22 cal. pellets free. Free supply of targets. Money back if not satisfied. Just send $1.00 plus 25c for postage and handling to- **Honor House Dept. 472RA81 Lynbrook, N. Y. 11563** Not sold in NY City.

IMPORTED LOCK BLADE STILETTO

9" Overall Length
5" When Closed

- **Opens instantly**
- **Sharp and Tough**
- **Stainless Steel Blade**

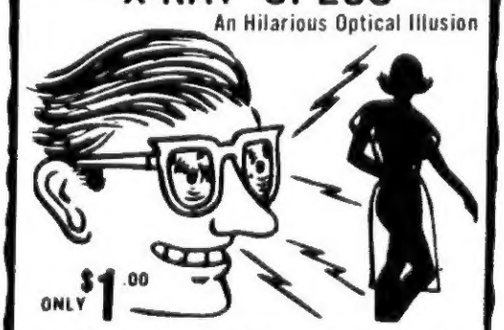
ONLY $2.75

Flips open instantly and locks automatically to prevent accidental closing. Razor sharp tough stainless steel blade for reliable use and hard, long service. Money back in 5 days if not satisfied. Send **$2.75** plus 25¢ to cover postage and handling.

ALLEY SPORTS MO Div.
Dept. 472ST81
35 Wilbur Street, Lynbrook, N. Y. 11563

X-RAY SPECS

An Hilarious Optical Illusion



ONLY $1.00

Scientific optical principle really works. Imagine — you put on the "X-Ray" Specs and hold your hand in front of you. You seem to be able to look right through the flesh and see the bones underneath. Look at your friend. Is that really his body you "see" under his clothes? Loads of laughs and fun at parties. Send only $1 plus 25¢ shipping charges Money Back Guarantee

HONOR HOUSE PRODUCTS CORP
Lynbrook, N. Y. Dept. 472XR81

WE'RE RUNNING THE STORY, MR. MAYOR! THE WHOLE TOWN'S BOUND TO FIND OUT, AND MAYBE IF WE EXPLAIN...
HOW CAN WE EXPLAIN, JESS EVERYBODY IN TOWN WENT TO THAT BANK! THEY'VE ALL GOT A STAKE IN THIS ROBBERY!

BUT MILLVALE'S LOSS WAS CLEAR PROFIT FOR THE CHILLING COMBO AT ARDMORE HOUSE, AND THEY PLANNED TO MAKE THE MOST OF IT!
LET'S HAVE A REAL CELEBRATION!
OH, YES! WE'LL EVEN GET DRESSED UP!

WHILE JOE AND MAGDA DRESSED VLADO FIXED THE REFRESHMENTS! HE LIT THE CANDLES AND SET THE DECANTER NEXT TO THE WINE GLASSES! PERFECT!
(HUMS) "I'VE GOT YOU UNDER... MMMM!"

AND HIS EFFORT WAS DULY NOTED BY THE COUPLE WHO SWEPT IN, ARM IN ARM...
I PROPOSE THE FIRST TOAST TO JOE, WHOSE PLAN...
NO, NO, VLADO! THE FIRST TOAST SHOULD BE TO OUR BROTHERS IN MILLVALE!

YES, MY DEAR! OUR BLOOD BROTHERS! HA! HA! OPEN ANOTHER BOTTLE OF RARE OLD MILLVALE '53, VLADO (SMACK)! I'M REALLY BLOODTHIRSTY TONIGHT!
TOO BAD IT'S STILL COOL FROM BEING IN THAT HOSPITAL REFRIGERATOR! IT HAS MUCH MORE FLAVOR AT BODY TEMPERATURE!
HEH, HEH, IF THE COPS CAME IN THEY'D CATCH US RED-HANDED!
MILLVALE CYTY HOSPITAL
WHOLE BLOOD
BUT THE PEOPLE WERE DESTINED NEVER TO SOLVE THE BLOOD-BANK ROBBERY, AND THE GOOD CITIZENS OF MILLVALE NEVER KNEW THAT THE BLOOD THE HAD DONATED FOR THEIR LOVED ONES FURNISHED A FEAST FOR VAMPIRES!